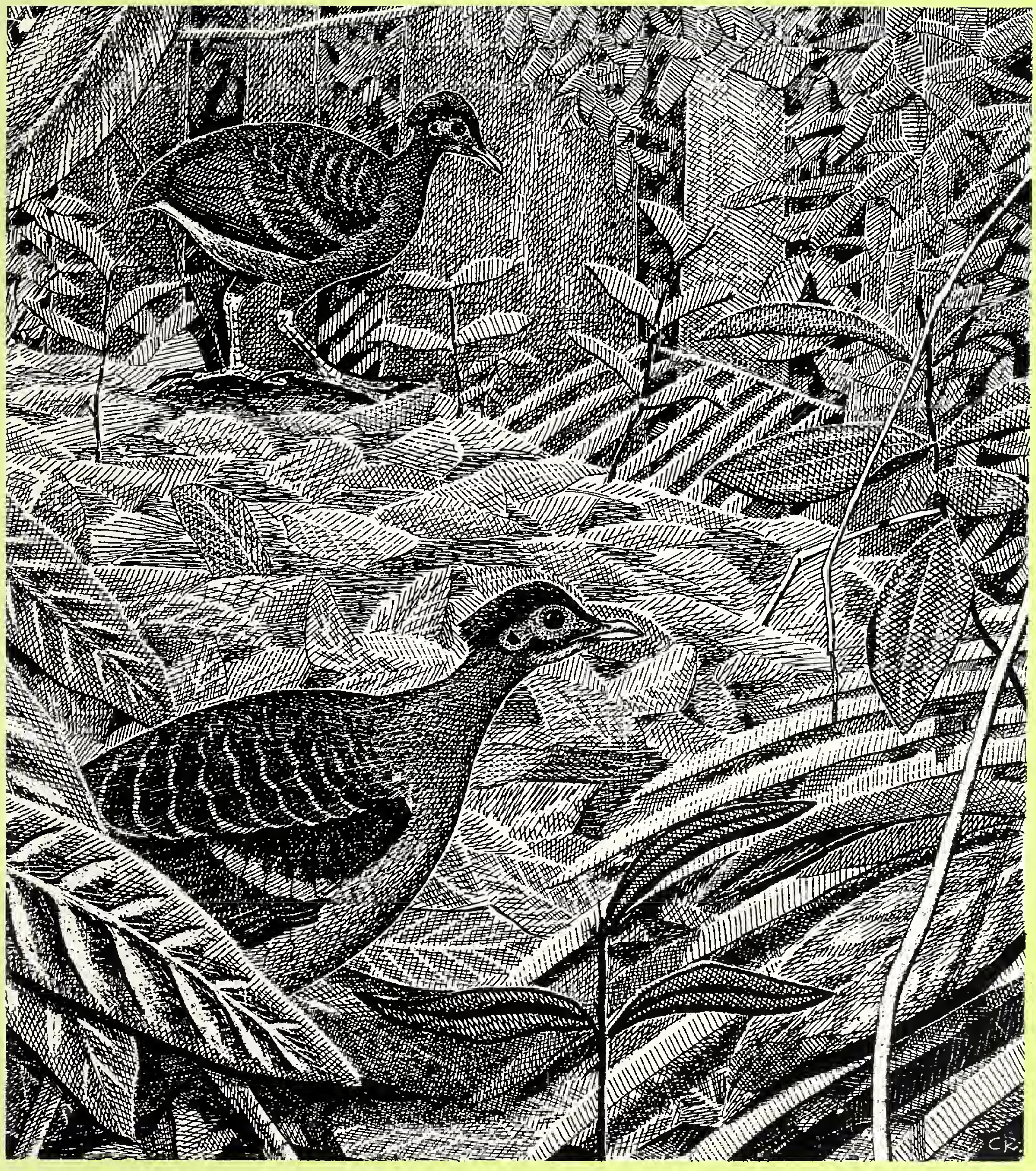
ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB



BULLETIN
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The **ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB** aims to:

- encourage an interest in the birds of the Oriental region and their conservation.
- liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies.
- collate and publish material on Oriental birds.

Two bulletins and a journal, *Forktail*, are published annually.

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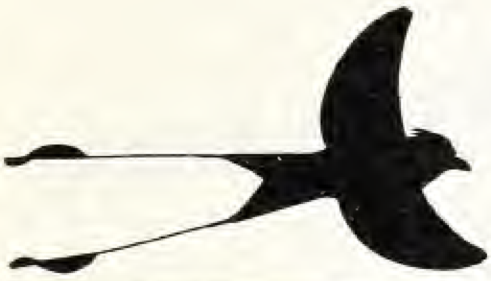
Mike Crosby, Jonathan Eames (Art Editor), Richard Grimmett, Tim Inskipp, Adrian Long (Editor), Michael Rank, Nigel Redman, Craig Robson and Helen Taylor.

Membership of OBC

Membership of the Club is open to all and costs £12 per annum (£8 reduced rate for nationals living in Oriental countries), and £20 for corporate members (organisations, libraries and universities). Special arrangements for payment in USA, Thailand and India. To join or for further details please contact the Membership Secretary, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2LD, UK.

Cover illustration: Molluccan Megapode *Megapodius wallacei* by Craig Robson. The original artwork is available through postal auction. All correspondance should be addressed to Craig Robson at: 63, Stafford Street, Norwich, Norfolk, UK.



Editorial

The OBC *Bulletin* has established itself as a major forum on Oriental birds. This is due in many ways to the great efforts over the last three years of my predecessor Helen Taylor in developing and maintaining the high standards of the *Bulletin*. Fortunately, Helen's invaluable contributions to the *Bulletin* are not yet finished as she has agreed to remain on the Editorial Committee.

It is perhaps a good testimony of the hard work of Helen and the Editorial Committee that many OBC members felt that the production of the *Bulletin* did not match the quality of its contents. This issue of the *Bulletin* is the first to be produced on a higher quality paper enabling the option for colour and black-and-white photographs. Indeed, this issue is the first to have colour pages through sponsorship by Andrew Johnson of the Bird and Wildlife Bookshop and Christopher Helm. Andrew is well known to British readers through his attendance at most of the OBC meetings held in England over the past few years. His positive attitude towards OBC has already been felt through his policy of donating 10 % of booksales that he obtains from members (see Club News) to the Club's Conservation Fund.

The higher production standards of the *Bulletin* made us rethink its design and layout. The major change to this *Bulletin* issue has been to increase its size from A5 to B5. We felt that the larger B5 format will give us greater design flexibilty, especially for colour insertions. The new layouts for this issue have been designed by Jack Fearnside of London Typographic Ltd and OBC Council are extremely grateful to Jack for his help, given freely, to the Club.

Although the production costs for the *Bulletin* are greater than before, software available on personal computers has meant that costs have been kept to a minimum through delivery of camera-ready material to the printers. OBC Council feel strongly that the improved *Bulletin* will help attract more members to the Club and provide greater scope for promoting two of the Club's aims namely, encouraging an interest in Oriental birds and their conservation and, to publish material on Oriental birds.

As well as wishing to maintain the quality of line drawings used in future issues of the *Bulletin* we are also looking for suitable colour and black and white photographs. We are also investigating the possibility of setting up a database of photographs depicting Oriental species and the potential for scanning in line drawings from past literature. The Editorial Committee has appointed Jonathan Eames as Art Editor to accommodate the extra work needed to carry out these tasks.

We are looking for more articles on identification but also want to maintain all the regular features. The results of the OBC Questionnaire showed that the great majority of members think that the *Bulletin* has the correct blend of articles but that more identification features would be welcome. As long ago as *OBC Bull.* 5 (in May 1987) the Editorial Committee asked for more identification features but little response was received. Indeed, many articles are still commissioned by the Editorial Committee rather than being sent in unsolicited.

As always the preparation of the *Bulletin* has been a joint effort of the Editorial Committee and with a lot of help from other people. Melanie Heath and Crawford Prentice have assisted with editing and I would particularly like to thank Rob Innes for his efforts in scanning the graphics and producing the camera-ready artwork and to Neil Parker for his advice and help with desk top publishing which has lead to some of the new design layouts of this *Bulletin*. I would also like to thank Craig Robson, David Mead, Bas van Balen, and Pete Hines who have provided line drawings for this issue. OBC is very grateful to ICBP for the use of their facilities.

Club News

The success of the OBC in funding conservation work in the Oriental Region has meant that increasing demands are being made on the Club's financial resources. In 1991 a total of £4,500 (US $7650) was given in conservation grants, and this year we are expecting to exceed that figure. Consequently, fundraising has become an ever more important activity of the Club, and this year has seen an increasing focus on expanding membership and sponsorship whilst maintaining traditional fundraising events such as the grand raffle.

Bird and Wildlife Bookshop service to OBC members

Thanks to the generous arrangement with the Bird and Wildlife Bookshop, whereby they donate 10% of the value of books sold to OBC members, the Club raised £773 (US $1320) between June 1991 and March 1992. In addition to making use of the POST-FREE service with the enclosed booklist and order form, members are urged to identify themselves as OBC members when purchasing books directly from Bird and Wildlife Bookshop.

OBC links with WildWings Travel

WildWings continue to be a keen supporter of the OBC conservation fund by donating 1% of the total cost of travel arrangements made with OBC members, which generated £225 (US $385) in 1991. However, in order for the Club to receive the maximum benefit from this arrangement, it is important that members inform WildWings that they are OBC members. Apart from providing a comprehensive travel agency service for birdwatchers, WildWings offer Antarctic tours at very affordable prices. For more information contact either John Brodie Good on 0272-259999 or Dick Filby on 0603-767757.

Corporate sponsorship scheme

Our recently launched Corporate Sponsorship Scheme for donors, providing a contribution of more than £500, has been well received. The Bird and Wildlife Bookshop was the first company to participate in the scheme by making a generous donation of £600 towards the cost of colour insertions in the Bulletin. As a corporate sponsor, Bird and Wildlife Bookshop are entitled to portray the Forktail logo on their promotional literature.

We are looking forward to welcoming many more companies to the OBC's Corporate Sponsorship Scheme, and we would be particularly interested to hear from members who may be in a position to assist the Club. It is possible that some of our members have influence in their company when it comes to charitable donations or are Trustees of a charity. If so we would like to hear from you!

Close ties with BIRDWATCH

The Club is pleased to welcome the newly launched magazine BIRDWATCH as our second corporate sponsor. BIRDWATCH will be circulating OBC membership forms and raffle tickets for the Grand Prize Draw and have kindly agreed to absorb the extra costs in postage entailed by these insertions. In addition, BIRDWATCH will be donating ten subscriptions for the Grand Prize Draw and contributing £100 towards the cost of hiring the Zoological Society meeting rooms for the AGM.

As many Club members have already discovered, BIRDWATCH already features articles on Oriental birds and will shortly launch a new series on bird conservation, with the first article profiling the OBC. For full details about the magazine and subscription rates, please see the enclosed leaflet.

New T-shirts for 1992

Following the great success last year of the Blue Pitta T-shirt in raising funds for the conservation work of the Club, two new designs, made to the same high quality, are now available. The first depicts a male Banded Kingfisher *Lacedo pulchella* with a forest background and the other is of a Red-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis amictus*, Black-and-

Yellow Broadbill *Eurylaimus ochromalus* and Rufous-collared Kingfisher *Actenoides concretus*. Members still hoping to purchase a Blue Pitta T-shirt will be pleased to know that further stock has been ordered. All T-shirts are priced at £11.00, which includes postage and packing at surface mail rates and they can be ordered using the enclosed flier.

Membership drive

Currently the OBC has nearly 900 members, but there are many areas of the world where we are poorly represented. In the USA we have only 43 members compared to 423 in the UK! This year has seen us focusing on the USA with King Bird Tours kindly offering the Club promotion in its direct mailing service. Additionally, a number of leading world birders in the USA have been contacted, and an article on the OBC will appear in a forthcoming issue of the American Birding Association's magazine *Birding*.

To support our membership drive in the Oriental Region, a corporate donor is being sought to fund 100 honorary members over the next three years. An honorary membership scheme of this nature will be of great assistance at a time when many Oriental members are suffering from the devaluation of their country's currency.

OBC Meetings in 1992

Manchester on Saturday 4 July. The meeting will begin at 2.00 pm and will feature talks by Carol and Tim Inskipp on Bhutan, Stephanie Tyler on Nepal and Frank Lambert on the effects of selective logging on bird communities in the lowland forests of Sabah.

Blakeney Village Hall, Norfolk on Sunday 30 August. Amongst the speakers will be members from the UEA-PHPA-LIPI-ICBP team presenting their work carried out on Taliabu, Indonesia in summer 1991. Colin Poole will talk on the birds of the Republic of Korea and Crawford Prentice will speak on Fraser's Hill, Malaysia.

Isles of Scilly on Thursday 15 October. The meeting will be held at the Porthcressa restaurant with speakers to be announced.

1992 AGM at the Zoological Society meeting rooms, Regents Park, London on Saturday 12 December. Talks will include Peter Garson of Newcastle University and a presentation of areas of avian endemism in the Oriental Region by Mike Crosby of ICBP.

OBC to attend British Birdwatching Fair

The Club will be attending the British Birdwatching Fair at Rutland Water, Leicestershire, UK from 4 to 6 September this year. This event is proving increasingly popular and OBC hopes that attendance will attract new members, increase awareness of Oriental birds and their conservation, and raise money for the Conservation Fund through sales. The Club's attendance has been made possible by the receipt of a conservation bursary from the Bird and Wildlife Bookshop for which we are most grateful. Any members at the fair are most welcome to visit the OBC stand.

OBC Questionnaire results

In 1991 a questionnaire was sent out to all OBC members covering a number of subjects concerning the Club's activities. It was encouraging that more than one in ten members responded to the questionnaire, and some of the results are summarized below.

Club priorities

The great majority felt that the Club's priorities were about right with some members wanting more money going towards conservation and only 8% of respondents suggesting more services for Club members.

Value of Club services

By far and away the most valued Club services are the OBC *Bulletin* and *Forktail* with 86% and 83% respectively placing these publications in the highest category. Meetings and sales scored lowest of the Club's services but most members rated them as useful. This probably reflects that the latter two services are biased towards members based in the UK.

Forktail

Subjects covering conservation, faunistics and identification were rated the most popular articles. Particularly popular papers were the two on Gurney's Pitta (*Forktail* 1 and 2), the two on Relict Gull (*Forktail* 4 and 6) and on the taxonomic status of *Acrocephalus* warblers (Forktail 6).

OBC Bulletin

Of the replies 94% thought that the current content of the bulletin was about right. Within the different bulletin sections 'Birdwatching Areas' was the most popular with 70% placing it in the highest category. 'Little Known Oriental Bird', 'Recent Reports', 'News and Views' and the feature articles were put in the top band by over 55% of the respondents. When asked whether additional features on identification or on trip reports would be welcomed both ideas scored highly in the top category.

Meetings

Of the respondents two-thirds do not attend OBC meetings but a number of suggestions were given for improving these events. Talks on trips were a little more popular than conservation or scientific subjects and the social nature of meetings themselves was an important reason for attendance. The least interesting slot at OBC meetings was the mystery slide competitions. If meetings costs increase by having professional speakers then this should come from takings at the door rather than a higher subscription rate, although a number of respondents felt that professional speakers was not necessary. Several respondents' thought that a meeting outside of the UK should be arranged.

OBC Council has already begun discussing the results of the questionnaire so that the Club continues to provide services that the ever-expanding membership wants.

Late appearance of *Forktail* 7

The 1991 *Forktail*, which should have been sent out in December last year, has been delayed due to circumstances beyond our control during the final stages of printing. We apologize for this delay and hope that members will receive their copies shortly.

OBC Checklist for 1993

The checklist of the birds of the Oriental Region is nearing completion and publication will be in 1993. OBC Council, as an interim measure, has decided to follow *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the world* by Charles Sibley and Burt Monroe (1990) and this is the first *Bulletin* to use this nomenclature and taxonomy. The OBC Checklist committee is currently reviewing the species content of Sibley and Monroe's book and some taxa may not be accepted as full species in the Club's checklist.

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Conservation Fund

The Club has continued to award a large number of grants for conservation work in the Orient made possible through the generous support and sponsorship of many individuals and organisations. Once again we are very grateful to *Leica Camera* who donated £500 towards the 1991 *Forktail Leica Award* and have pledged the amount for the same award this year. Funds for survey grants were generated mainly from profits of Club sales and especially from the Grand Raffle held in October 1991. OBC would like to thank the following for their generous donation of prizes: *Leica Camera* who donated the first prize, *Nikon* for their donation of the second prize, and Wildwings for the third prize. The Club is also grateful to Bird Recording Services, *British Birds, Birding World,* Sanderling Books and the Rare Bird Photographic Library, who generously donated other prizes, and all those who have continued to support the raffle by buying tickets. Individual donations continue to be very important to the Conservation Fund and OBC would particularly like to thank David Mills, Director of Naturetrek, and the audience at a Naturetrek slideshow for their recent donation.

Third *Forktail Leica Award* Winner Announced

Madhusudan Katti was announced as the winner of the third *Forktail Leica* Award at the Club's AGM in December. The award will enable Madhusudan to purchase equipment for his study of bird diversity and frugivory in Arunachal Pradesh, north-east India. Little is known of the eastern Himalayan avifauna, except that it is perhaps the most species-rich area in India. The study, which will take place between January and July 1992, will focus on frugivorous species such as hornbills and pigeons and their food plants.

Applications welcomed for Fourth *Forktail Leica* Award

Applications are welcomed, especially from nationals in the Orient for the fourth *Forktail Leica* Award worth £1,000 ($1,860). The closing date is 1 October 1992. To apply or discuss the proposed study please write to the Club's Conservation Officer for an application form.

Survey grants

The Club is pleased to announce a large number of survey grants for conservation work, many of which have been given to Oriental nationals. Applications are welcomed at any time of the year, but please do apply a few months in advance of your study, as decisions are taken at OBC Council meetings which are held about four times a year. To apply or discuss the planned work please contact the Conservation Officer, Carol Inskipp.

Migration sites in north Karnataka, India

A grant of £178 ($331) has fully funded Dr J.C. Uttangi's identification of waterbird migration stop-over sites in Dharwad district in north Karnataka, India in February and March 1992. A large number of irrigation tanks occur along the migratory routes of waterbirds in Dharwad and, although large numbers of ducks, geese and cranes assemble, no ornithological studies have been made to date.

Study of breeding biology of a new species of *Phylloscopus* in Hainan, China

A grant of £300 ($558) is helping Per Alström and Urban Olsson to study a *Phylloscopus* Warbler, which they recently discovered on Hainan and will describe shortly as a new species to science. In April 1992 they visited Jianfengling forestry reserve where the species is common, and plan to document the breeding ecology of the species and assess the size and density of the population.

River bird study in Nepal

An award of £300 ($558) partly funded Dr Stephanie Tyler in a survey of river birds in Nepal's middle hills and terai in March and April 1992. Data were obtained on the ecological requirements of riverine species in order to help predict the effects of land use changes, such as erosion, sedimentation and enrichment on the river ecology.

Study of key forests and their threatened birds on Sumba, Indonesia

A grant of £300 ($558) will help to fund an Indonesian team member of an expedition to Sumba between June and October which will be led by Dr Martin Jones of Manchester Polytechnic's conservation unit. Currently there is a great danger that Sumba's eight endemic bird species, and indeed the whole forest ecosystem, will be lost. The team plan to help conserve the remaining patches of primary forest, and to investigate the effects of the cage-bird trade on parrot populations.

Conservation of Green Peafowl in east Java, Indonesia

An award of £561 ($1,043) has been given to Andi Prima Setiadi and Iwan Setiawan, students at Padjadjaran University to help fund their survey of Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* between December 1991 and December 1992. Good numbers of the species are still found at their study site on Mount Ringgit in east Java. They will investigate habitat requirements, population, and threats to the Green Peafowl, and try to raise awareness and appreciation of the bird amongst the local community.

Avifaunal survey of university catchment forest area, Hantana, Sri Lanka.

Upali Ekanayake has been awarded £210 ($390) to survey the university catchment forest area at Hantana. The forest is probably the best bird habitat close to the city of Kandy and holds at least seven of Sri Lanka's endemic bird species. It is hoped that the forest will be declared a bird reserve which, once established, will be of great educational value.

Survey of birds and their habitat on Longhu Mountain, China.

A grant of £300 ($558) has been awarded to Zhou Fang, Director of the Institute of Biology, Guangxi Academy of Science to survey the birds of the subtropical forests on Longhu Mountain in south Guangxi province. This work promises to be exciting given that Zhou Fang recently saw two White-eared Night-Herons *Gorsachius magnificus* there, the first records of the species since the 1960s.

Studies of montane forests and their birds in east Java, Indonesia.

Bas van Balen has been awarded £300 ($558) to assist his investigation of the relationship between forest structure and bird distribution in an east Javan montane forest. It is hoped that the results will help to identify the effects of human-induced forest disturbance on bird species diversity and numbers and, in particular, determine if any species are indicative of forest disturbance.

Black-necked Crane survey in Bhutan

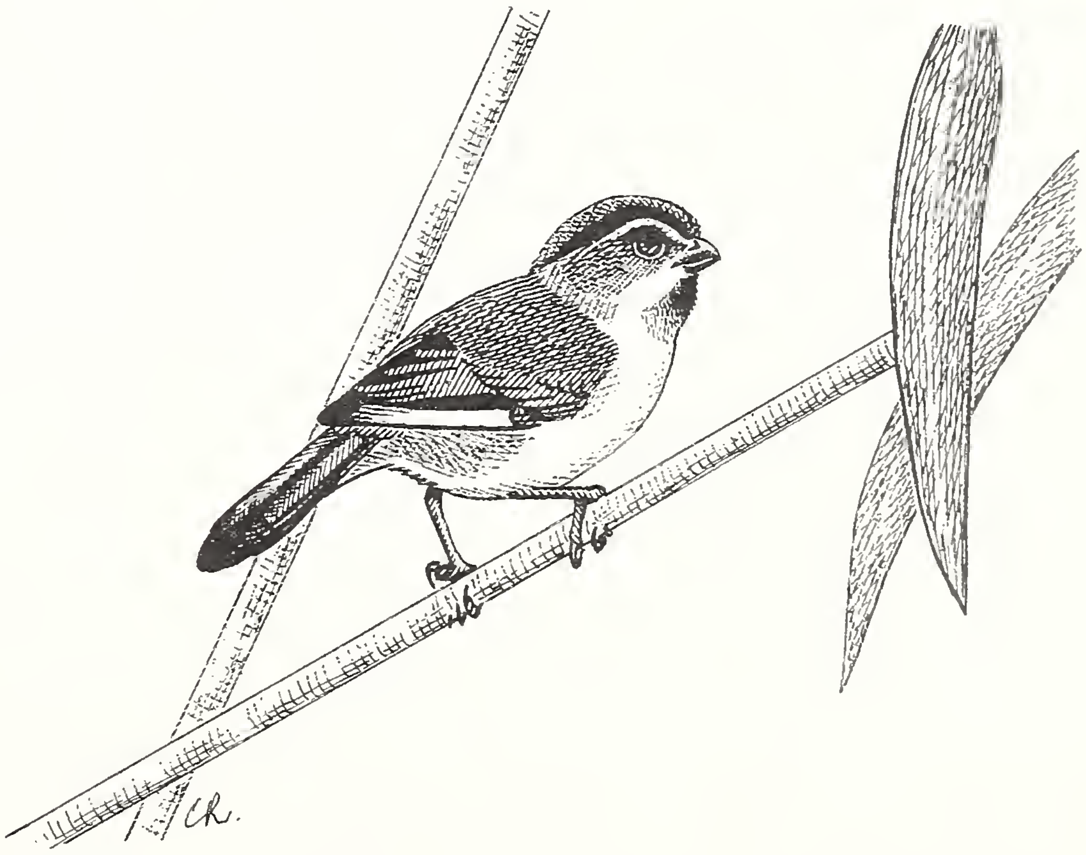
Last year OBC awarded Col. R. T. Chacko (retired) £400 ($744) towards the first co-ordinated survey of wintering Black-necked Cranes *Grus nigricollis* in Bhutan, which was carried out between October 1991 and April 1992. An additional grant of £100 ($186) was given to assist Col. Chacko in surveying the departure of the cranes in spring 1992.

CONSERVATION FUND IN ACTION

Ornithological survey of Chitlang forest, central Nepal 1991

An interesting report sent by the Nepal Bird Watching Club team describes the initial phase of their ornithological survey of Chitlang forest, which was carried out in October and November 1991. A broadleaved temperate oak-rhododendron forest dominates the upper slopes of Chitlang forest, and a Blue Pine forest with some oak and sparse undergrowth covers the lower slopes. A total of 118 bird species was recorded including the nationally rare Large Niltava *Niltava grandis*, Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* and Black-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis nipalensis*.

The team identified charcoal production as the main threat to the forest, but wood collection for fuel and timber, gathering of foliage for animal fodder and bedding, and heavy grazing by domestic livestock are also significant threats. Although it is mainly the local people of Chitlang who are dependent on the forest for their daily needs, the team found that some firewood collectors walk more than two hours to remove wood from the forest. Meetings were held with local people regarding conservation measures for the forest and further surveys were carried out in early 1992. A full account of the Nepal Bird Watching Club survey will appear in a future bulletin.



Black-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis nipalensis* by Craig Robson

Cambridge Philippines Rainforest Project 1991

A preliminary report has been received, detailing the Cambridge expedition's findings and their recommendations. An OBC survey grant helped to fund one of the two Filipino team members. The birds of the remnant rainforests of Negros, Siquijor and Mindoro were surveyed for ten weeks in the summer of 1991.

Local land pressures are causing the loss of the primary and mature secondary forest with low altitude areas being particularly at risk. The team consider that virtually no forest will remain below 900 m on either Negros or Mindoro within 10 years, unless new forest preservation measures are introduced and enforced now. If deforestation continues, the team believes that eight Philippine endemic bird species would be pushed to, or near to, extinction namely, Negros Bleeding-heart *Gallicolumba keayi*, Mindoro Bleeding-heart *G. mindorensis*, Black-hooded Coucal *Centropus steerii*, Visayan Tarictic Hornbill *Penelopides panini nigrorum*, Mindoro Hornbill *P. mindorensis*, Visayan Writhed Hornbill *Aceros waldeni*, Flame-templed Babbler *Stachyris speciosa* and White-throated Jungle-Flycatcher *Rhinomyias albigularis*.

UEA-PHPA-LIPI-ICBP Taliabu Project 1991

One of the two Indonesian members of the University of East Anglia-Indonesian Institute of Sciences-Directorate General for Forest and Nature Conservation (PHPA)-ICBP Indonesian Section Taliabu project was partly funded by an OBC grant of £300 ($558). The team surveyed the birds of Taliabu, one of Indonesia's Sula Islands, for seven weeks in September and October 1991.

They recorded six of the seven species listed as threatened by ICBP; Sula Scrubfowl *Megapodius bernsteinii*, Slaty Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina schistacea*, Sula Cicadabird *Coracina sula*, Henna-tailed Jungle-Flycatcher *Rhinomyias colonus*, Helmeted Myna *Basilornis galeatus* and Bare-eyed Myna *Streptocitta albertinae*. All were found in a wide variety of habitats, but were most numerous in selectively logged lowland forests. The remaining threatened species, the Taliabu Owl *Tyto nigrobrunnea*, was considered very rare and it is thought likely that the owl requires the presence of large trees for nesting.

The expedition gathered data to make recommendations for a management plan for the proposed Pulau Taliabu Reserve. Although there was little or no primary lowland forest remaining, they found a wide variety of habitats represented in the proposed reserve including a substantial proportion of forest that would form the core area and a large area of selectively logged lowland forest.

Around the Orient

Closure of accommodation at Khao Yai National Park

The Thai Government closed all overnight accommodation in Khao Yai National Park under the mistaken impression that this will benefit conservation through reducing the disturbance of wildlife. The Tourism Authority of Thailand bungalows have existed for almost thirty years. Their use by visitors did not disturb wildlife as they were constructed on land which was previously cleared by villagers before the establishment of the park.

The closure has deprived Thailand of its only national park to have reasonably good, tourist-class accommodation, and so leaves visitors with no opportunity to stay in close proximity to nature. Instead, visitors to Khao Yai are expected to stay in large air-conditioned mega-resorts currently being constructed by the private sector outside the park boundary. The closure will greatly exacerbate the problems caused by motor vehicles through bringing about an increase in daily commuting to and from the park.

Khao Yai's problems in fact stem from a variety of causes, none of which will be solved by closing the park bungalows. These include: inadequate controls on the behaviour of visitors and a lack of effective patrolling against poachers; trails and information/education facilities are poorly maintained; too many private vehicles use roads inside the park and free access to the park airspace by military helicopters and aeroplanes causes disturbance; there is a general lack of understanding of the true role of national parks by government officials (including National Parks Division Officials) and many members of the general public; the park is used inappropriately by the many non-essential service personnel, highway workers, police, etc., who, together with their families, live inside the park; garbage disposal within the park is inadequately dealt with; bungalows, park buildings and workers' accommodation erected by the National Parks Division are not subject to planning control and stand in stark contrast to the Tourism Authority of Thailand bungalows which were a model of tasteful, appropriate accommodation; and finally recommendations of the World Wildlife Fund-sponsored management plan for Khao Yai National Park have not been implemented.

Members are urged to write polite letters to the individuals and bodies listed appealing for improved management of the park.

Please write to: Mr Anand Panyarachun, Prime Minister, Government House, Phitsanuloke Road, Bangkok. Send copies of your letter also to Mr Mechai Viravaidya, Prime Minister's Office, (at the same address) as well as to the editor, Bangkok Post Newspaper, 3rd Floor U-Chuliang Foundation Building, 968 Rama IV Road, Bangkok 10500, and to Phil Round at Mahidol University, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Rama VI Road, Bangkok 10400.

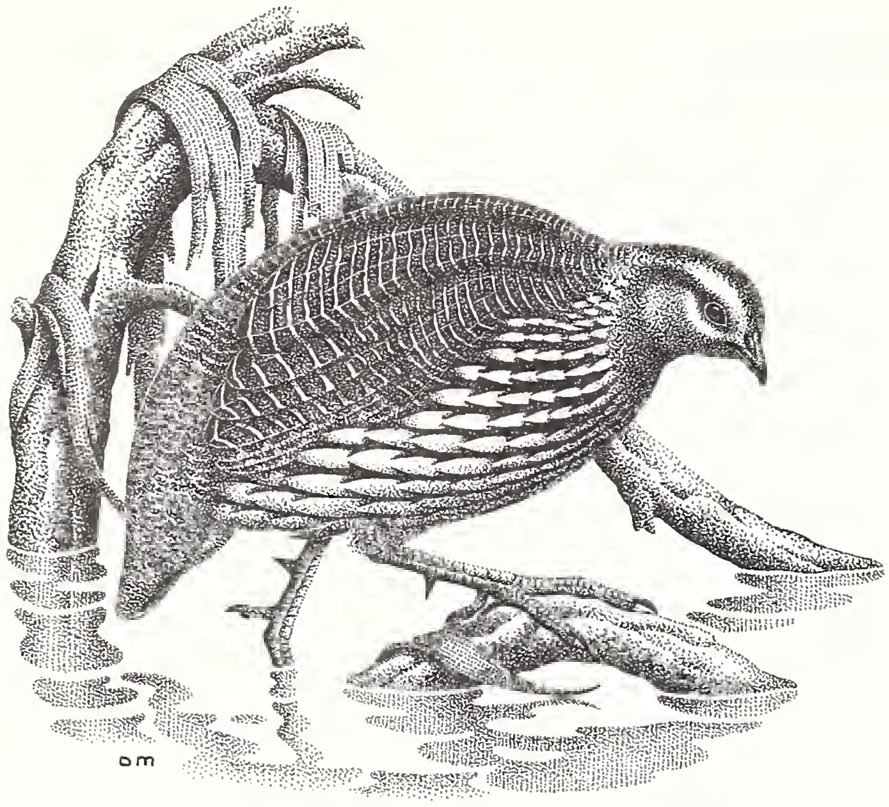
Contributed by Phil Round, January and May 1992

Studies of the Swamp Francolin from North Indian Terai

Recent studies in Dudwa National Park in north India, and a detailed survey of the whole north Indian terai, have revealed new information on the Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis*. The bird is one of the key species of terai grasslands and is listed as threatened. Little is known about its status, ecology and behaviour.

Swamp Francolins were seen or heard calling in about 16 sites in and around Dudwa National Park and found in at least ten other localities in the north Indian terai. The initial results suggest that the species is endangered by the continued loss of terai grassland, but is still found in good numbers where suitable habitat remains. The conversion of extensive tracts of primary forest and grasslands into agricultural fields, especially sugarcane, has been going on since the 1950s and, as a result, the terai grasslands are now irreversibly fragmented.

A full scale study on this species is planned to assess its status and chances of long-term survival. Studies will investigate whether the Swamp Francolin is able to survive in sugarcane fields. These can be considered 'structurally similar to natural tall grasslands, and sightings of the species in and around sugarcane fields tentatively suggest that they have adapted to this man-made habitat.



Swamp Francolin *Francolinus gularis* by David Mead.

Current management practice for the grasslands of Dudwa, which involves annual burning and harrowing, will also be examined. To date management has been aimed largely at threatened mammal species such as Swamp Deer *Cervus duvauceli*, Tiger *Panthera tigris* and Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, but the implications of annual burning and harrowing on lesser known species like Swamp Francolin are unknown.
Source: WPA News No. 34

Crested Shelduck update

Since the report in *OBC Bull.* 14 of a possible sighting of Crested Shelduck *Tadorna cristata* in south-west China, which is outside the species' known range, more information has come to light in China on this elusive and rare duck. Efforts to find Crested Shelduck in its historical range have yielded no positive evidence that it still exists, but there remain some unconfirmed sightings from local people.

The Chinese Ministry of Forestry distributed 15,000 leaflets depicting the Crested Shelduck and, in response, sightings were reported from all over China. Ornithologist Zhao Zhengjie and his colleagues remained unconvinced, as they felt sure that most of the sightings in fact referred to Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*, Falcated Duck *Anas falcata* or Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*. But they did not give up hope and, instead, conducted their own surveys in the historical range of Crested Shelduck in north-east China. They visited the Changbai Mountains near the Chinese-North Korean border, the Yalu and Tumen river valleys also on the Chinese-North Korean border and the Da Hing'an mountains several hundred kilometres further north-west into China.

Zhao Zhengjie has himself studied the birds of the Changbai mountains for 20 years without coming across the Crested Shelduck. However, in May 1987 he interviewed a local forestry worker, Zhang Zhongwen, who said he had seen four birds, similar to those depicted on the Chinese Ministry of Forestry leaflets, on a reservoir three years earlier.

Others interviewed reported seeing Crested Shelduck in the Yalu and Tumen river valleys on the Chinese-North Korean border, including a hunter who said he had seen eight in 1976 at Gushan, 50 km from the mouth of the Yalu. They did not congregate with the other wildfowl in the area and were very wary. In another sighting, an amateur ornithologist reported seeing five on the Yalu in autumn 1984 and two more at the same place in April 1986. Further sightings were reported in the Da Hing'an mountains to the north west, including one by a hunter who said he had shot a Crested Shelduck in 1982, "but then he didn't know the value of this duck, so he ate it."

Zhao and his colleagues from the Jilin Province Forestry Research Institute conclude that these reports should be taken seriously "because most of the information is from fishermen and hunters who have a definite knowledge of birds and the ability to identify them....in particular, their descriptions of Crested Shelduck are realistic."
Contributed by Michael Rank, December 1991.

Is the Cebu Flowerpecker extinct?

The endemic Cebu Flowerpecker *Dicaeum quadricolor*, which was thought to be extinct, may still survive if a possible sighting of the species in the Cebu Islands in the Philippines earlier this year is confirmed.

Rob Timmins saw a pair of either the Cebu Flowerpecker or the closely related Bicolored Flowerpecker *Dicaeum bicolor* in a patch of remnant forest on the island on 17 February. The latter species has never been recorded on Cebu but some caution is necessary before the sighting is confirmed as being of Cebu Flowerpeckers. There have been no records of the species since the turn of the century and virtually all its primary forest habitat has been cleared.

The flowerpeckers were seen near to Tabanan in central Cebu in an area which may be within the boundaries of the Central Cebu National Park. They were found in a narrow strip of forest about 4 km long but less than 200 m wide on a limestone escarpment at 500 m altitude. The forest has been altered in several parts and probably contains less than 10 ha of primary forest. However, several other rare species were seen, including the Black Shama *Copsychus cebuensis*, two Blue-crowned Racquet-Tails *Prioniturus discurus* and the Colasisi *Loriculus philippensis*. It is possible that the last could have been the Cebu endemic *L. p. chrysonotus* which is also thought to be extinct.

Filipino ornithologists plan further visits to the area but as yet there is no news on subsequent sightings.

Source: Rob Timmins, May 1992.

New sightings of the Moluccan Megapode

In October 1991, René and Charlotte Dekker discovered a nesting ground of the Moluccan Megapode *Megapodius wallacei* on Haruku Island with an estimated 100-200 pairs using the site on the night they visited. Lack of recent observations of the megapode from a nesting ground had given some cause for concern because the species has a very limited range and, being a communal nester, it is prone to disturbance from large scale egg collecting.

At the newly discovered site, egg harvesting is carried out daily but is permitted only by one person, the tenant paying RP 2,750,000 (US $1,350) annually. During the peak season 200-300 eggs are harvested daily and the tenant deliberately leaves a number of eggs to keep the population stable. The nesting ground is well guarded with no tree felling or firewood collection permitted, and dogs, which kill and disturb Maleos *Macrocephalon maleo* at their nesting-grounds in Sulawesi, are forbidden in the village nearest the site. Formerly, similar measures controlled Maleo nesting sites in Sulawesi but changes in tradition and the immigration of people from other islands led to uncontrolled harvesting of all the Maleo eggs. The site on Haruku shows that sustainable harvesting of eggs can work without seemingly direct negative effects to the Moluccan Megapode.

Source: Megapode Newsletter, vol.5 No. 2 and 3: May/September 1991.

Singapore Master Plan for Nature Conservation unveiled

The Master Plan for Nature Conservation in Singapore, the first in the country's history, is a comprehensive proposal for the conservation of the sites that have survived the encroachment of development and is the culmination of conservation efforts launched in 1987 by the Singapore Branch of the Malayan Nature Society (MNS). The Master Plan has three main sections focusing on conservation philosophy, a general overview of the status of the various life forms, and site reports and directory.

A total of 28 sites are recommended, including some already protected by law, such as the Bukit Timah Reserve. It was necessary to include sites that are already legally protected, because in most cases it is not clear whether they are regarded as reserves for nature or for future exploitation. The sites amount to 3,791 ha, of which 1,909 ha are already under some form of protection. A five star rating system was used to prioritize the sites, of which 11 received the top rating.

Source: MNS 1991.

Grim future for asian hornbills

That four species of hornbill have only a 50% chance of surviving for the next five years was one of the worrying conclusions of the ICBP/IUCN/CBSG hornbill conservation assessment workshop held in Singapore in September 1991, which aimed to develop conservation strategies for Asian hornbills. The workshop found that of the 53 subspecies of Asian hornbills, only nine are "stable", 26 are "vulnerable", 14 are "endangered" and four are "critical". The last four taxa were deemed to have a 50% probability of extinction within five years or two generations (whichever is longer). In preparation for the meeting all available data on distribution and abundance of hornbill species were gathered and summarized at the subspecific level. During the meeting, various workshops were held to develop population estimates, and to list and evaluate threats. Nearly 50 individuals from most of the Asian countries where hornbills occur attended the meeting.

Source: ICBP Hornbill Group Newsletter/ BBC Wildlife, January 1992

Threat to Green Junglefowl

Moves intended to protect and increase awareness about wildlife seem to have backfired in Indonesia, leaving the Green Junglefowl *Gallus varius*, which is endemic to Java, under increased threat from hunting.

The Bekisar, the sterile hybrid of the Green Junglefowl cock and a domestic hen, has long been a favourite cage bird in Java and singing contests between birds have become a cultural tradition. However, a decree from the state Minister for Population and Environment only allowed the contests if the birds had been bred in captivity.

In 1990 the Minister for Home Affairs announced that each of Indonesia's 27 provinces should have a floral and a faunal symbol to promote a sense of pride and awareness of the natural environment. The Bekisar was chosen as the symbol for East Java Province and immediately every hotel, business and well-to-do citizen wanted one of the birds in their forecourts. Because the birds are not being used for song contests the restrictions on origin have been ignored. As a result, wild populations of male Green Junglefowl are being seriously reduced to supply this new market.
Source: WPA press release.

New reserves in China

The Hebei Provincial Environmental Protection Committee has announced that the Province will set up four nature reserves, two montane and two coastal, to protect the remaining forest resources, rare animals and birds.

The state-listed Mount Wuling nature reserve located in Xinglong county will be administered by the forestry ministry and Hebei province. Covering an area of 16,793 ha, this reserve boasts a rich primeval forest, macaques and other animals. The Mount Wutai reserve is a high peak in the northern part of Mount Taihang with extensive tracts of intact forest and species such as Brown Eared-Pheasant *Crossoptilon mantchuricum*. So far, some 22,573 ha has been mapped out for protection in Mount Wutai reserve.

The Golden Coastal nature reserve on the Bohai Sea in Changli county is another state-listed nature reserve of 300 km^2 with some 208.5 km^2 covering sea, and the rest being a major dune system. The Beidaihe reserve, which each year in the late autumn to early winter attracts hundreds of thousands of migrant birds covers 1.5 km^2 at the mouth of Beidaihe river.
Contributed by Michael Rank

Habitat loss in Beijing

During the winter of 1990-1991, Kunming Hu, the largest lake at the Summer Palace in Beijing, was drained and all of the silt excavated and removed to be used as fertiliser. Unfortunately, with the silt went the reeds, scrub and lotus at the southern tip of the lake. This area was best known as a summer site for Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens*, but also attracted a wide variety of migrants (See Birdwatching Areas in *OBC Bull.* 12).

The two other lakes in the palace gardens were not affected. The southern one has a lotus bed to the south of the peninsula and in the north-east corner. The reeds are less extensive and hold fewer bird species and numbers. However, the Summer Palace is still well worth a visit, especially during the winter when good numbers of duck occur.
Contributed by Mike Kilburn, January 1992.

Follow that bird...

In September 1991, a tiny radio capable of communicating with a satellite was attached to a White-naped Crane *Grus vipio* in Daurski Nature Reserve near the Russian-Mongolian border. The satellite monitored the migration of the crane across China to a resting area at the mouth of the Yellow River. Finally the crane flew to the mudflats of Poyang Lake, the major wintering ground for both this species and the Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus*.
Source: ICF Bugle Vol. 18 1992.

White-naped Cranes *Grus vipio* by Craig Robson

Siberian Cranes declining

In December 1991, 20 crane specialists from five nations met in Karachi, Pakistan, to discuss how to help save the western flocks of Siberian Cranes *Grus leucogeranus*. There are perhaps fewer than 20 cranes left on the wintering grounds in Iran and India; during the past decade, the Indian flock has plummeted from 38 to 6.

It is thought that the decline of the Siberian Crane flock that winters at Keoladeo National Park near Bharatpur, India is a consequence of the massacre of migratory cranes as they traverse Afghanistan, particularly in Parwah Province, and in mountain passes in north-western Pakistan. Unfortunately, the current strife in Afghanistan makes any conservation efforts extremely difficult and potentially hazardous.
Source: ICF Bugle Vol. 18 1992.

Pakistan approves National Conservation Strategy

At the beginning of March the Pakistan Government approved the development of a National Conservation Strategy, to manage the national resources of the country. Amongst the 14 core priority programmes are biodiversity, protecting watersheds and supporting forestry plantations, all of which could lead to positive steps towards conserving bird species.

Although the Government has put forward RS 150 billion and will incorporate the programmes into the relevant Government departments and the National Five Year Plan, much of the task of implementing the strategy will ultimately rest on non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and the Pakistani people.
Source: Journalists' Resource Centre for the Environment, Pakistan, press release.

China scores achievements in protecting cranes

China, which is home to nine crane species, has made great progress in conserving members of the family through state by state protection. Bai Jingyu, director of the China Crane Conservation Committee, a branch of the China Wildlife Conservation Association, said that 19 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities holding crane habitats have participated in the crane protection effort. Thus far, China has opened 18 crane nature reserves covering 720,000 ha.
Contributed by Michael Rank.

Hopes rise that Chinese Crested-Tern survives

A survey of coastal wetlands in the Yellow River Delta by members of Shandong Teacher's University, in September 1991, yielded several interesting records, and notably a probable sighting of three Chinese Crested-Terns *Sterna bernsteini.*

There have been no confirmed sightings of the species since 1937, although there have been a handful of unsubstantiated records in recent times. The latest sightings are much further north than any previously known sites for Chinese Crested-Tern, but the area where the birds were seen lies in the Yellow Sea area where other rare species such as Saunders' Gull *Larus saundersi* are now known to breed. It is hoped that further surveys will bring confirmation that the tern still survives.

Source: report by Shandong Teachers' University to the Asian Wetland Bureau on a survey of shorebirds and coastal wetlands in the Yellow River Delta.

UK timber companies defy Philippines ban

Two of Britain's largest timber companies are importing wood from the Philippines in defiance of an export ban from the source country. They are not breaking British law because the Department of Trade and Industry has not imposed an import ban. Gliksten which is a subsidiary of Meyer International, is selling Philippine mahogany (*Lauan*) in some of its 200 Jewson outlets and Timbnet from Oxford is selling tropical hardwood, including *Lauan*. The timber was bought from East Asiatic Timber, a broking agent, which has denied that the timber comes from the Philippines.
Source Oryx Vol. 26, 1 March 1992.

Action programme for wetlands

The conference on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl in South and West Asia in Karachi, Pakistan in December 1991 adopted an Action Programme to address the problems of wetland deterioration and destruction in the region. Greater cooperation was called for regarding the conservation of transborder wetlands and parties to the Bonn Convention were urged to develop a multi-

lateral agreement for waterbird conservation. The Action Programme is available from IWRB, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BX, UK.
Source: IWRB News No. 7, January 1992.

Great Philippine Eagle bred in captivity

The first ever Great Philippine Eagle *Pithecophaga jefferyi* to be bred in captivity hatched in January at the Philippine Eagle Conservation Centre near Davao on Mindanao. *Pag-asa* (Hope) was conceived through artificial insemination and hatched using incubators, and marked the end of more than 10 years research by the Philippine Eagle Conservation Program Foundation. The well publicized birth has secured funds from several corporations for the care of the eaglet and towards further attempts to breed more eagles in captivity.

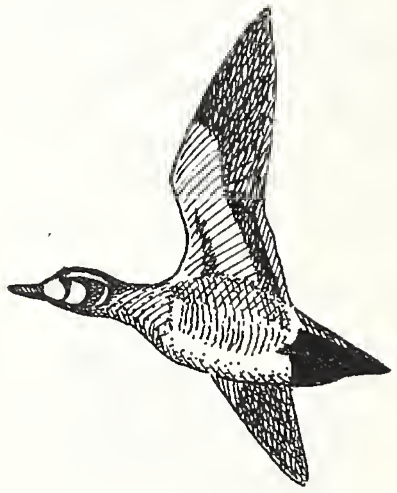
The Great Philippine Eagle has declined dramatically in recent times and there are now estimated to be less than 200 individuals in the wild, with 13 in captivity at the Foundation's conservation centre. Habitat destruction, such as illegal logging, slash and burn agriculture and mining, is the main cause of the species's decline. Whilst it is encouraging to note the arrival of the first captive- bred eagle, it represents a minor achievement in saving the species from extinction. Unless the few remaining large tracts of forest are properly conserved on Luzon, Samar, Leyte and Mindanao islands, the species is doomed to extinction.
Source: Reuters.

Dr Boonsong Lekagul 1907-1992

Thailand's most eminent conservationist, Dr Boonsong Lekagul, died on February 10 1992 at the age of 85. Dr Boonsong had worked tirelessly for conservation in Thailand since the 1950s when he and like-minded colleagues established the Association for the Conservation of Wildlife. He will be remembered by most ornithologists for his field guides to the birds of Thailand, but in fact his greatest interest lay with mammals, especially wild cattle and bats. He published many books and articles and also championed successfully the introduction of wildlife and national park legislation for Thailand. Ironically, in the year of Dr Boonsong's death, another great lobbying effort is required from conservationists over the management of Thailand's first National Park, Khao Yai, if his earlier pioneering efforts are to be consolidated.
Source: *Bangkok Post*, February 1992

News from CITES meeting in Kyoto, Japan

At the Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), held in Kyoto, Japan from 2 to 13 March 1992, several decisions were made which affect Oriental birds. The Parties agreed to adopt C. G. Sibley and B. L. Monroe (1990) *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the world* as a taxonomic and nomenclatural reference to all species of birds. A number of proposals to add species to Appendix I (for which all commercial trade is banned), or Appendix II (for which all trade is monitored and subject to various controls), were agreed. The Tanimbar and Philippine Cockatoos *Cacatua goffini* and *C. haematuropygia* were transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I, as was the southern subspecies of the Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis.* Another two hornbills were added to Appendix I: Rufous-necked *Aceros nipalensis* and Plain-pouched *A. subruficollis*, and the following genera (with the number of species in brackets) were added to Appendix II: *Aceros* (8), *Anorrhinus* (2), *Anthracoceros* (5), *Buceros* (1) and *Penelopides* (6).



Baikal Teal *Anas formosa* by Dave Bakewell.

The Baikal Teal *Anas formosa* was also added to Appendix II, having shown a population decline in recent years, and the sociable nature of the species making it particularly vulnerable to hunting and trapping.
Contributed by Tim Inskipp.

High tide at Negombo Lagoon

A survey grant was awarded to Rex De Silva towards a study of an increasingly threatened wetland in the wet zone of Sri Lanka. In this article Rex describes some of the results from the bird survey and highlights the main threats to the lagoon.

Negombo Lagoon (which is actually an estuary) is located in the wet zone of Sri Lanka at 7°10′N 79°51′E (figure 1). It is about 13 km long and 4 km at its widest point and covers an area of about 3,550 ha. The present mean depth at low tide is around 50 cm, although deeper channels of up to 4 m are found at the northern end, where the lagoon opens into the sea near the town of Negombo.

The north end of the lagoon contains several mangrove islets, mudflats and small sandy beaches; many of these areas being submerged at high tide and during floods. Freshwater enters the lagoon at the southern end from several rivers (Dandugan Oya, Kalu Oya and Kelani Ganga via the Hamilton canal) and from the Muthurajawela Swamp. The swamp acts as a silt trap and buffer for the lagoon, absorbing some of the freshwater runoff during heavy rains.

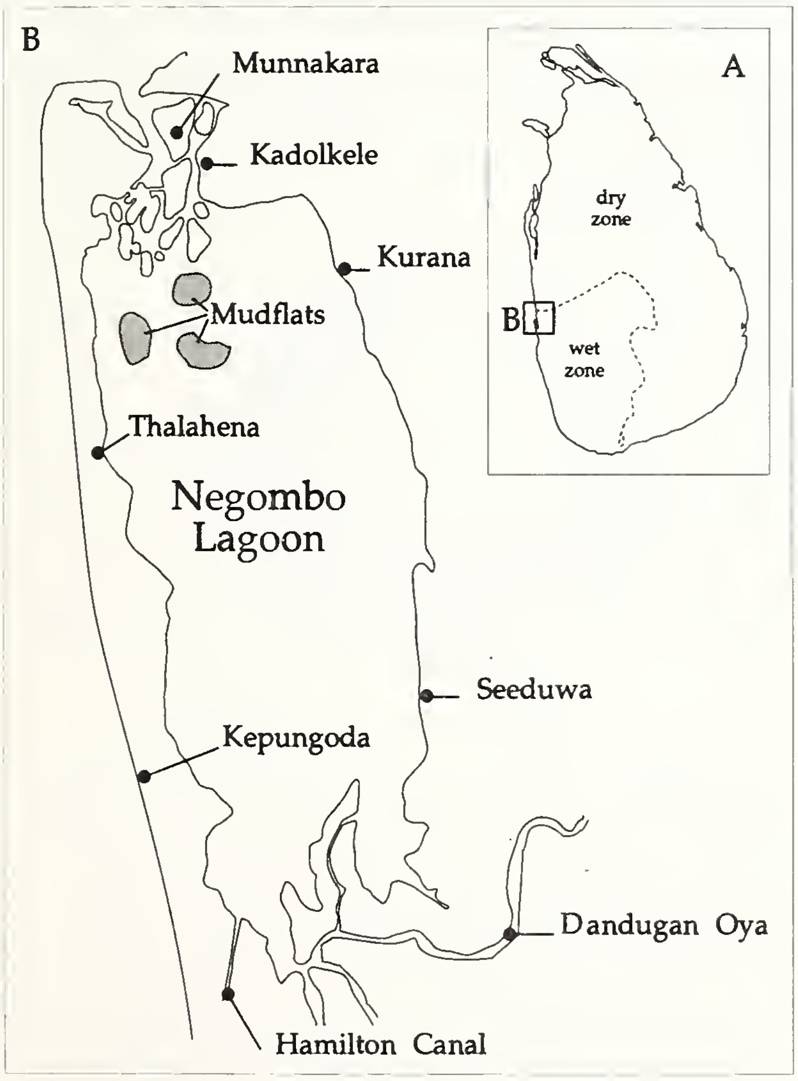


Figure 1. The location of Negombo Lagoon in Sri Lanka.

The study of Negombo lagoon began in 1990 and aimed to: determine the status of all bird species (including those breeding) and compile a checklist; find out if, and to what extent, any species (migrant or resident) is utilized as a food source; and identify and categorize all existing and potential threats to the environment, especially those resulting from development, pollution, tourism, over-fishing and other human activities.

An avifaunal survey of Negombo lagoon was carried out by a team of experienced birdwatchers from May 1990 to April 1991. The lagoon was surveyed using both land and water transport with at least two visits each month, and the bird numbers estimated using spot counts.

Of a total of 51 species recorded from the lagoon, 30 are resident (this includes local migrants as well), 21 are migrants, two are vagrants and one is of uncertain status (Appendix 1).

The tidal mudflats and beaches are used for resting and roosting by wintering gulls and terns[2]. They are also feeding grounds for many waders such as Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Pacific Golden Plover *P. fulva*, Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus*, Greater Sand Plover *C. leschenaultii*, Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* and Common Greenshank *T. nebularia* as well as Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*, Purple Heron *A. purpurea*, Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*, Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayii*, Great Egret *Casmerodius albus*, Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* and Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*.

Several resident bird species nest in the lagoon area, including cormorants, herons, egrets, whistling teal, waterhens, lapwings and sunbirds (Table 1). No evidence was found to suggest that birds or their eggs were exploited for human consumption.

Table 1. Breeding bird species recorded at Negombo Lagoon.

Taxon	No of nests	Month
Dendrocygna javanica	17	May-July
Alcedo atthis	1	June
Pelargopsis capensis	1	July
Halcyon smyrnensis	1	May
Ceryle rudis	1	June
Amaurornis phoenicurus	4	Apr.; Aug.-Sept
Vanellus indicus	1	July
Haliastur indus	2	May-June
Phalacrocorax fuscicollis	23	March-May
P. niger	29	April-June
Mesophoyx intermedia	13	April-June
Egretta garzetta	21	March-June
Ardea cinerea	1	April
A. purpurea	4	May-June
Casmerodius albus	8	May-June
Ardeola grayii	12	June-July
Butorides striatus	2	June
Nycticorax nycticorax	24	March-April
Corvus levaillantii	17	Jan-Dec
C. splendens	31	Jan-Dec
Nectarinia lotenia	7	April-May
N. zeylonica	1	May

The Negombo Lagoon faces several threats and some of the more serious are outlined below. Silting in the lagoon is severe. In 1986 the mean depth of the lagoon was 80 cm but by 1989 silting had reduced this to about 50 cm (Dr. Shanthi Wickremaratne, pers. comm.). Silting has occurred because of a combination of factors: the outflow of water from the lagoon has become impeded by the build up of sandbanks; land reclamation (including parts of the Muthurajawela Swamp; and mangrove destruction). Since 1946 more than 150 ha of the lagoon have been lost to silting and land reclamation (Dr. Shanthi Wickremaratne, pers. comm.).

The lagoon waters and especially the bottom sediments are polluted with unacceptably high levels of mercury, tin, copper, chromium, led and tributyltin (TBT). Most of these pollutants probably originate from the nearby Katunayake Free Trade Zone, Ekala industrial estate as well as from industries located around the lagoon. TBT can be traced directly to the boatyards located near the lagoon mouth, which use anti-fouling paints containing the chemical. The lagoon is more polluted in the northern end from the towns of Negombo and Munnakara. Inadequate sanitation means that untreated sewage enters the lagoon and garbage including large quantities of fish offal are also dumped indiscriminately.

Fishing methods such as draw nets, push nets and trawls are destroying the sea-grass beds, which are important feeding grounds for birds. Formerly, non-powered boats only were permitted to fish within the lagoon but, recently, increasing numbers have been observed fishing in the deeper areas of the lagoon. This is due to an influx of refugee-fishermen from the war-ravaged north of Sri Lanka.

The development of tourism has also brought problems. More shoreline hotels have been built and powered-craft use the lagoon, disturbing the avifauna.

Aquaculture projects have begun at several sites on the lagoon margins and the practice of discharging 'enriched' water from the ponds into the lagoon has lead to eutrophication in some areas. Additionally, the aquaculture ponds attract birds which feed on the shrimps and fish, and some of the farmers have resorted to shooting the feeding birds.

In the long run population growth, especially in the fishing village of Munnakara, poses the greatest threat, both to the lagoon ecosystem and the avifauna. Pressure from people has meant increasing levels of pollution, disturbance to the fauna, over-utilisation of lagoon resources, increased land reclamation and silting. Somehow this pressure must be relieved otherwise efforts to protect the lagoon habitat and its birds will fail.

An outline of the first steps to try and alleviate the increasing threats to the lagoon were recently published in a Master Plan[3]. This has been put to the government and if accepted would require the introduction of legislation for the protection of the area.

The plan calls for preventing access to the mangrove islands and mudflats and controlling the use of powered craft within the lagoon by zoning areas for pleasure craft well away from the mangrove islets, mudflats and the mangrove-swamp. The powered fishing craft and destructive fishing methods should be banned and a minimum mesh size on gill-nets introduced. New aquaculture or reclamation projects should not be allowed in the lagoon area. Legislation to prevent disturbance to birds, especially those nesting is recommended and further encroachment for housing on the southern part of Munnakara island should be prevented. An environmental awareness programme for residents, schools, churches, temples, fisheries cooperatives and social service organisations about the value of the lagoon is recommended and this could be coordinated by conservation organisations such as March for Conservation, Wildlife & Nature Protection Society, Sri Lanka Natural History Society, Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka and Seabird Watch.

Acknowledgements

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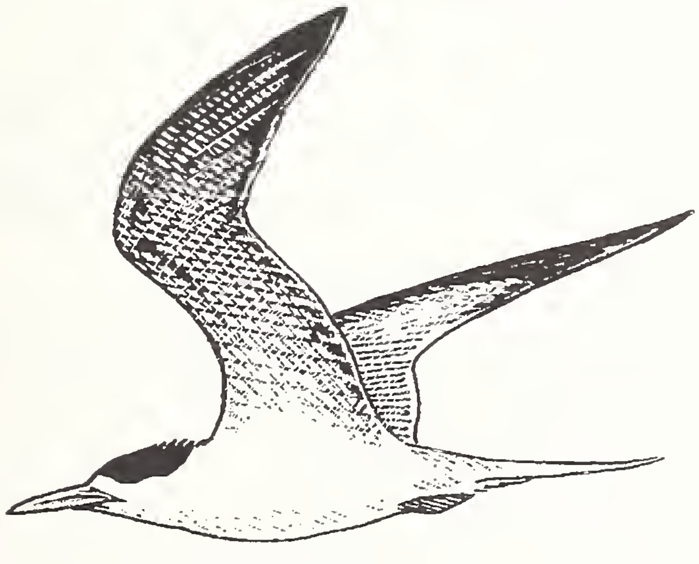

Great Crested-Tern *Sterna bergi* by Craig Robson.

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Appendix 1.

List of bird species recorded at Negombo Lagoon. Status codes are: (R) Resident; (L) local migrant; (M) migrant; and (A) accidental.

		Status
Dendrocygna javanica	Lesser Whistling-Duck	R
Alcedo atthis	Common Kingfisher	R
Pelargopsis capensis	Stork-billed Kingfisher	R
Halcyon smyrnensis	White-throated Kingfisher	R
Ceryle rudis	Pied Kingfisher	R
Merops philippinus	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	M
Amaurornis phoenicurus	White-breasted Waterhen	R
Numenius phaeopus	Whimbrel	M
Tringa totanus	Common Redshank	M
T. stagnatilis	Marsh Sandpiper	M
T. nebularia	Common Greenshank	M
T. glareola	Wood Sandpiper	M
T. hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper	M
Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper	M
Haematopus ostralegus	Eurasian Oystercatcher	M
Himantopus himantopus	Black-winged Stilt	L
Pluvialis fulva	Pacific Golden Plover	M
P. squatarola	Grey Plover	M
Charadrius leschenaultii	Greater Sand Plover	M
C. mongolus	Mongolian Plover	M
Vanellus indicus	Red-wattled Lapwing	R
Larus fuscus	Lesser Black-backed Gull	M
L. brunnicephalus	Brown-headed Gull	M
Sterna nilotiea	Gull-billed Tern	M
S. caspia	Caspian Tern	L
S. bengalensis	Lesser Crested-Tern	L
S. bergii	Great Crested-Tern	R
S. sandvicensis	Sandwich Tern	M
S. hirundo	Common Tern	M
S. albifrons	Little Tern	L
S. repressa	White-cheeked Tern	A
Chlidonias hybridus	Whiskered Tern	M
Haliastur indus	Brahminy Kite	R
Haliaeetus leucogaster	White-bellied Fish-Eagle	L
Phalacrocorax fuscicollis	Indian Cormorant	R
P. niger	Little Cormorant	R
Egretta garzetta	Little Egret	R
E. gularis	Western Reef-Egret	L/M
Ardea cinerea	Grey Heron	R
A. goliath	Goliath Heron	A
A. purpurea	Purple Heron	R
Casmerodius albus	Great Egret	R
Mesophoyx intermedia	Intermediate Egret	R
Ardeola grayii	Indian Pond-Heron	R
Butorides striatus	Striated Heron	R
Nycticorax nycticorax	Black-crowned Night-Heron	R
Hirundo rustica	Barn Swallow	M
Corvus splendens	House Crow	R
C. levaillantii	Jungle Crow	R
Nectarinia lotenia	Long-billed Sunbird	R
N. zeylonica	Purple-rumped Sunbird	A

Rex I. De Silva, Hepporawatte, Dampe, Madapatha, Piliyandala, Sri Lanka.

Some hints on the identification of five *Alcedo* kingfishers in the Orient

A streak of iridescent blue as a kingfisher flies past; your head moves round in slow motion and "it's" gone. What species was it? In this article the authors draw attention to some of the identification pitfalls of five kingfisher species from the genus *Alcedo*.

Alcedo is represented by nine species in the Orient[17] and this article examines the identification of five of them, namely: Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules*, Common Kingfisher *A. atthis*, Blue-eared Kingfisher *A. meninting*, Blue-banded Kingfisher *A. euryzona* and Small Blue Kingfisher *A. coerulescens*. Whilst each species bears distinct characteristics of size and coloration, fleeting views of an individual can cause confusion and even prevent identification to species.

There is extensive overlap in the ranges of these species, except for Blyth's Kingfisher whose range is allopatric with Blue-banded Kingfisher and Small Blue Kingfisher (Table 1). The ranges of Common Kingfisher and Blue-eared Kingfisher overlap widely throughout the Oriental Realm, especially in the Indian Sub-continent, South-East Asia and the Lesser Sundas. In parts of the Greater and Lesser Sundas, Common, Blue-eared, Blue-banded and Small Blue Kingfisher ranges' overlap; in parts of Indochina and the Himalayan foothills there is overlap between Blyth's, Common and Blue-eared Kingfishers (Table 1).

Of the five species Small Blue (length 15 cm) is the smallest and Blue-eared and Common Kingfishers are only slightly larger (length 16-17 cm)[7]. Blyth's is the largest (length 22 cm) which should, in most views, prevent any confusion with Blue-eared and Common Kingfishers in its range[7]. Blue-banded is intermediate in size (length 20 cm) between Blyth's and Common Kingfisher[7].

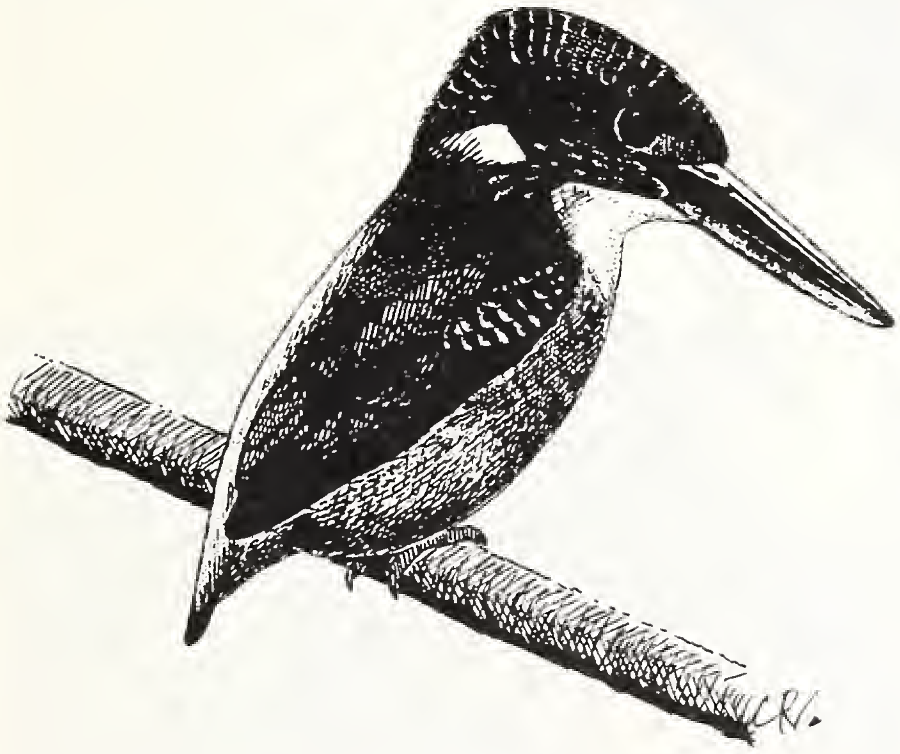
The Common Kingfisher is the most widespread and, probably, the best known species of the genus being found throughout the Palaearctic and across Indonesia to Papua New Guinea and the Solomons[4,11,17]. In the Oriental Region five subspecies of Common Kingfisher occur, showing differences in body size and plumage tones[7]. Of the subspecies found in the ranges of the other four *Alcedo* kingfishers, *A. a. bengalensis*, *A. a. taprobana* and *A. a. floresiana* are distinguished by their orange ear-coverts and the green tones in their plumage; Blyth's, Blue-eared, Blue-banded and Small Blue never show this combination of features.

The fourth subpecies, *A. a hispidoides*, which is found in Sulawesi, Banggai and the Sula Islands has blue ear-coverts and blue upperparts lacking in any green tones (Plate 1). It is therefore very similar to Blue-eared Kingfisher and identification is, perhaps, best made by differences in call. The voice of Common Kingfisher consists of a high-pitched piping of usually two or three notes (combinations of 'ti', 'tit' 'che')[4], whereas Blue-eared Kingfisher has a higher pitched and shorter call, often only giving one note[12].

The Blue-eared Kingfisher shows only slight morphological variation throughout its range, six subspecies being recognized in the latest treatment of the genus[7]. Whilst the adult plumage of all races of the species is distinctive, juveniles have orange ear-coverts, a feature shared with the Common Kingfisher. Unlike Common Kingfisher, however, juvenile Blue-eared Kingfisher may show mottling on the breast and cheeks and the upperparts lack any green tones.

The Small Blue Kingfisher occurs on Java and more recently has been found in south Sumatra[9,21,22] (Table 1). The upperparts of the species are turquoise with green tones on the crown and the underparts are white except for a turquoise breast band. This species has white lores and throat and a small white patch on the ear coverts. The plumage, lacking any rufous, and its small size rules out confusion with the other three species occurring in its range.

The Blue-banded Kingfisher is restricted to the Greater Sundas, Peninsular Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand. The plumage of male Blue-banded Kingfisher differs from the Common and Blue-eared Kingfishers by the presence of a broad blue breast band and a whitish centre to the belly. It also shows an orange patch on the lower ear-coverts, a feature not shown by any of the other species occurring in its range. The female Blue-banded Kingfisher also has an orange patch on the lower ear-coverts but lacks the blue breast band of the male and has orange underparts. Female Blue-banded can be confused with Common and Blue-eared Kingfishers (Figure 1), but adult Blue-eared Kingfisher does not show orange on the ear-coverts and Common Kingfisher is smaller and is cleaner in appearance with richer bluer tones on the wing coverts and crown. The voice of Blue-banded Kingfisher has been described as being less shrill than that of Commmon Kingfisher [12].



Female Blue-banded Kingfisher *Alcedo euryzona* by Craig Robson

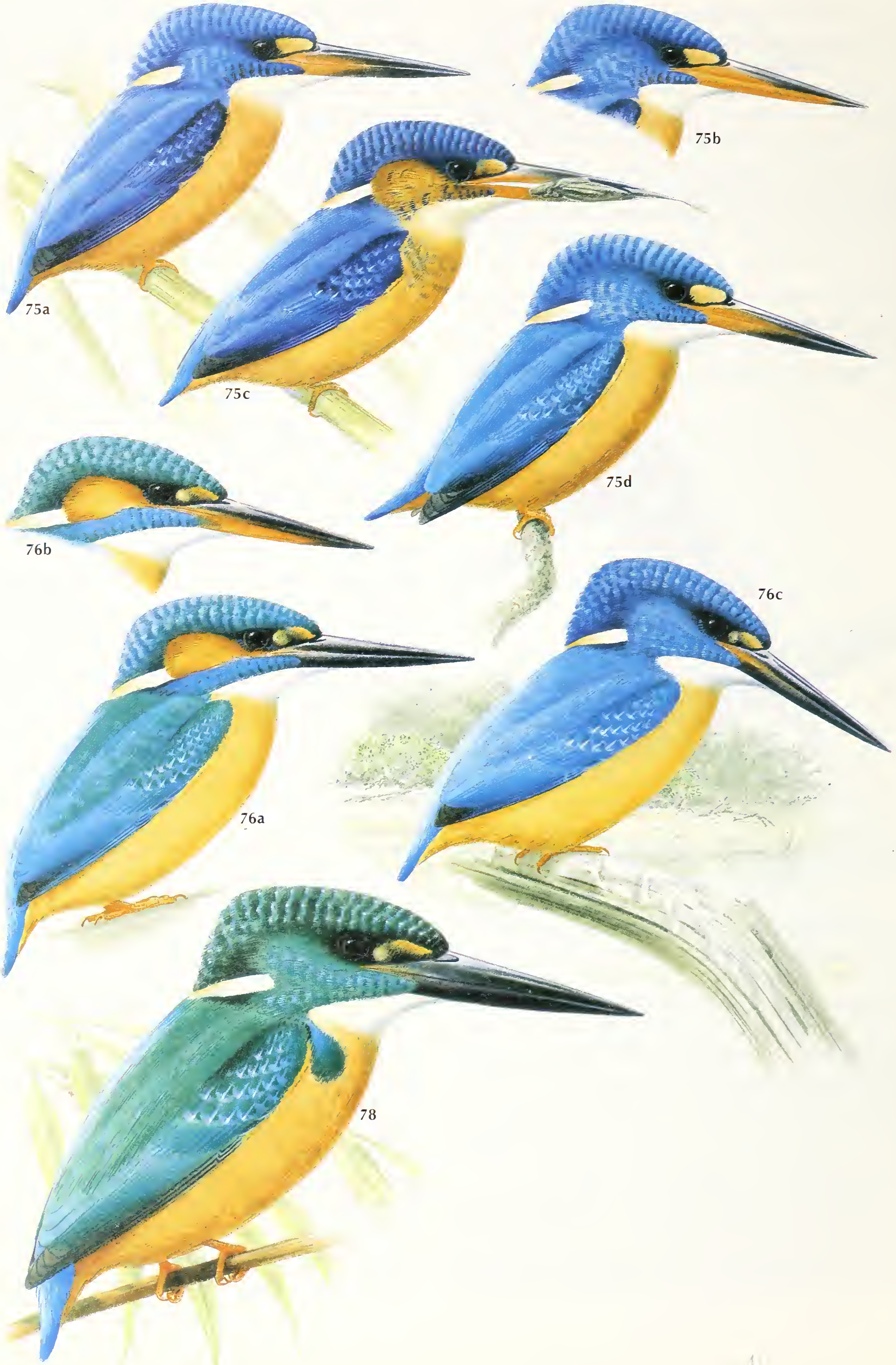
Blyth's Kingfisher is rather like a giant, dark version of the Common Kingfisher without rufous ear-coverts (Plates 1-5). The crown appears spotted with glossy-blue crescent-shaped feather tips against the dark, almost dull black, feather bases and centres. The species is reminiscent of female Blue-banded Kingfisher but they do not overlap in range (Plates 4 and 5). The call of Blyth's Kingfisher has been described as explosive and hoarser than Common Kingfisher, more like that of Blue-eared Kingfisher (Robson pers. obs.).

Habitat can seldom be used alone for identification but can help to identify a bird to species, especially when a poor view only is obtained. The Common Kingfisher, unlike Blyth's, Blue-eared and Blue-banded which are mainly forest dependent and resident, is a migrant throughout much of South-East Asia (although sedentary populations do exist; Table 1). It shows the widest habitat preference of the five species, occurring almost anywhere where there is water, including freshwater swamps and marshes, mangroves, coastlines and the lower reaches of larger rivers and creeks. On migration the species often uses paddyfields and can be seasonally common in this habitat (authors pers. obs.). It is less likely to occur along smaller water courses in evergreen forests than Blyth's, Blue-eared and Blue-banded Kingfishers.

The Small Blue Kingfisher is a coastal species of mangroves, but is also found in more open areas such as paddyfields and sandy beaches. The Blue-eared Kingfisher is found on pools and streams in evergreen and mixed deciduous forests up to 1,500 m[1,11,12]. It is also found uncommonly along coastal creeks and in mangroves[7]. The Blue-banded Kingfisher is found along streams and rivers in evergreen forests from lowlands mainly to 800 m [7,12] but some records are from as high as 1,500 m[21]. Blyth's Kingfisher is an inhabitant of larger forest streams and rivers from sea-level to 1,200 m [1,6,7]. Recent records of the species from north Annam in Viet Nam were in lowland forests down to 50 m altitude[5].

Most sightings of *Alcedo* kingfishers should be identifiable to species but there are occasions when confusion is possible. This is more likely in parts of the Orient where the range and status of the species' are still unclear. For instance, the distribution of the Blue-eared Kingfisher is still poorly known in Sulawesi where it overlaps with the race (*hispidoides*) of Common Kingfisher which has blue ear-coverts; and the species has never been recorded in Cambodia, although it is found in neighbouring south-east Thailand and Cochinchina (Table 1). The Blyth's Kingfisher is poorly known and probably occurs in low densities throughout its range. The species is currently listed as threatened[3].

This article highlights some of the main differences between Blyth's, Common, Blue-eared, Blue-banded and Small Blue Kingfishers. Those readers requiring more details on sub specific variation, nesting and diet should refer to the recently published *Kingfishers, bee-eaters and rollers: a handbook.* by C. Hilary Fry, Kathie Fry and Alan Harris.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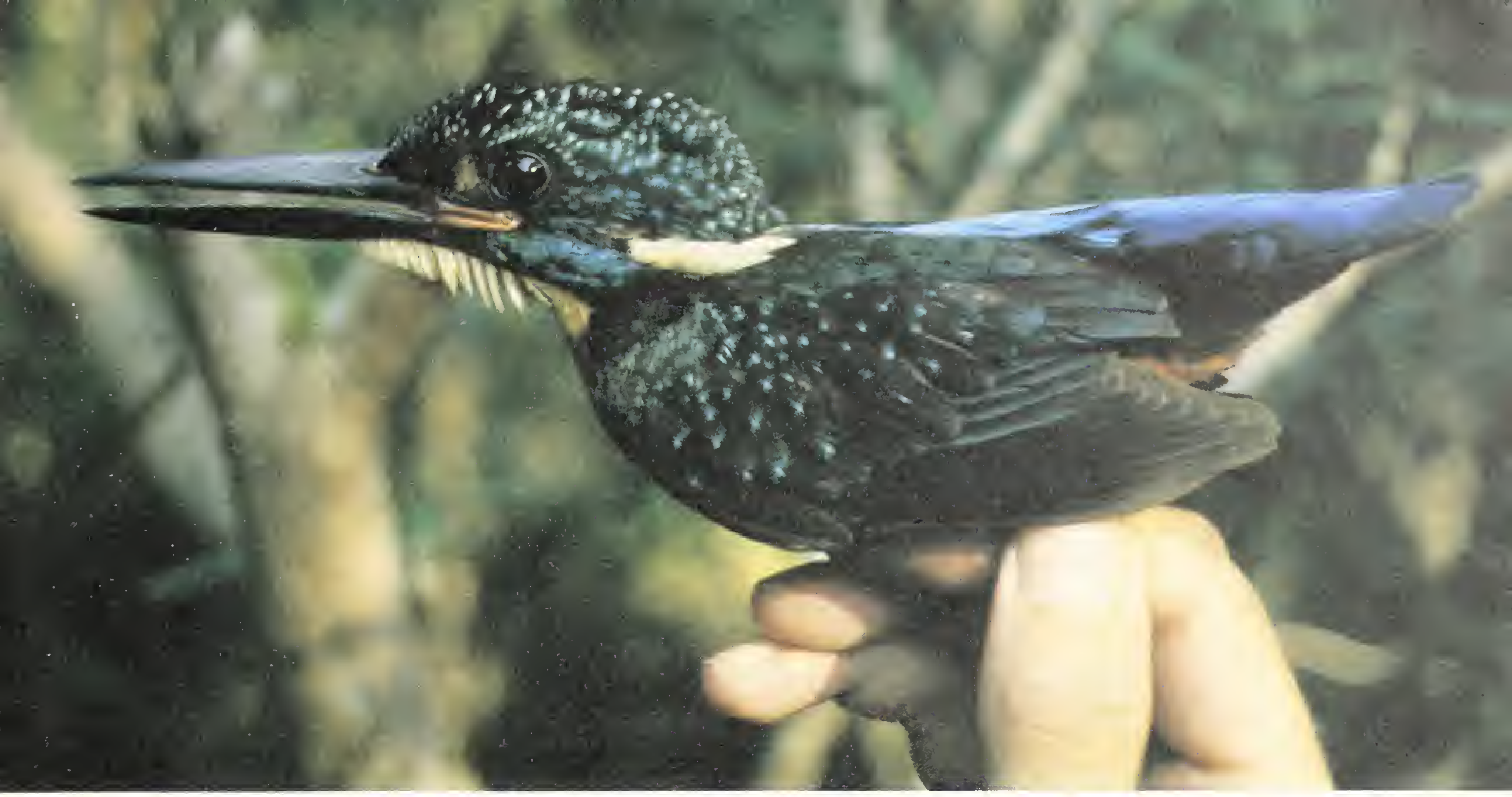
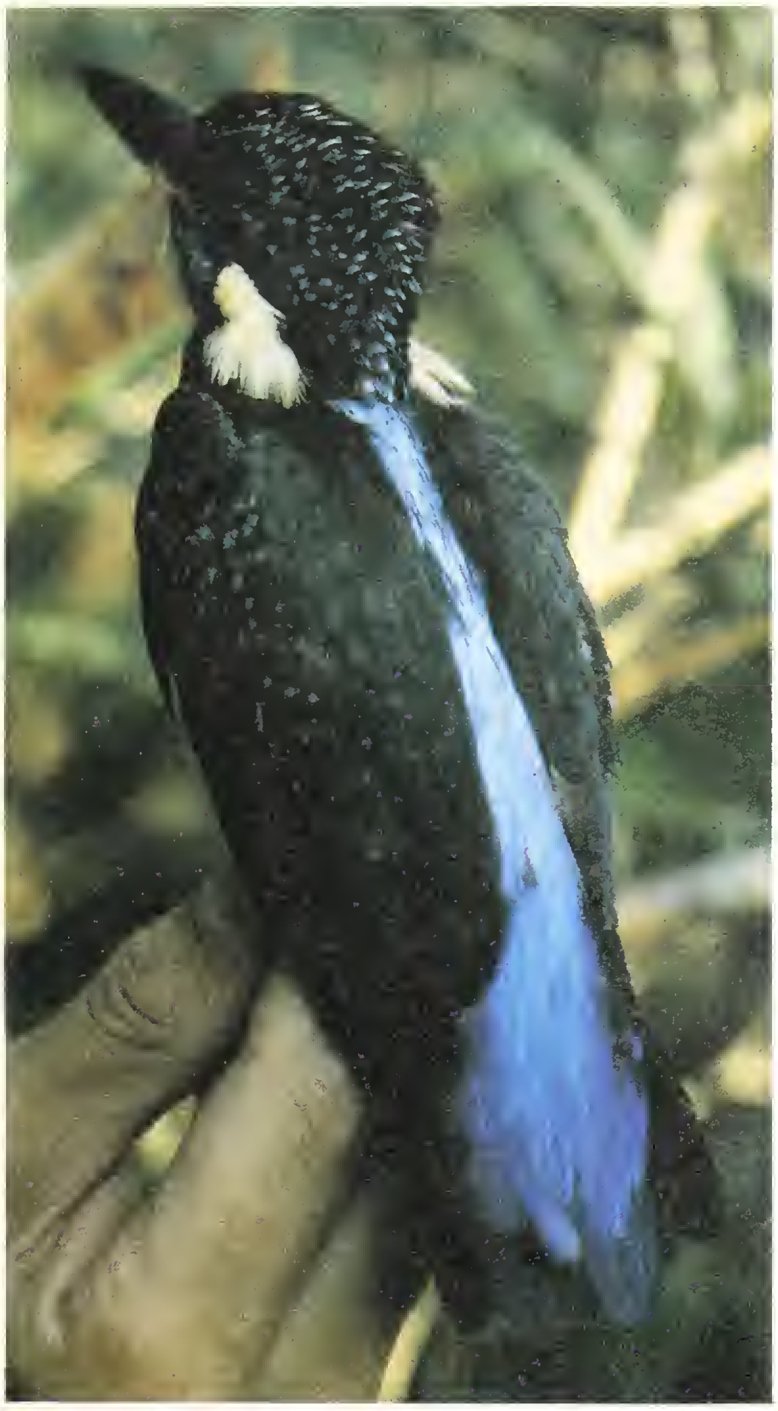


2

Plate 1 (opposite) from Fry, Fry and Harris (1992). 75 Blue-eared Kingfisher *Alcedo meninting*: a, adult male nominate race; b, adult female nominate race; c, juvenile nominate race; d, adult male A. m. rufigaster. 76 Common Kingfisher *A. atthis*: a, adult male nominate race; b, adult female nominate race; c, adult male A. a. hispidoides. 78 Adult male Blyth's Kingfisher *A. hercules*.

Plate 2 and 3. Adult male Blyth's Kingfisher Annam, Viet Nam, February 1990 (Photos: J. Eames).

3



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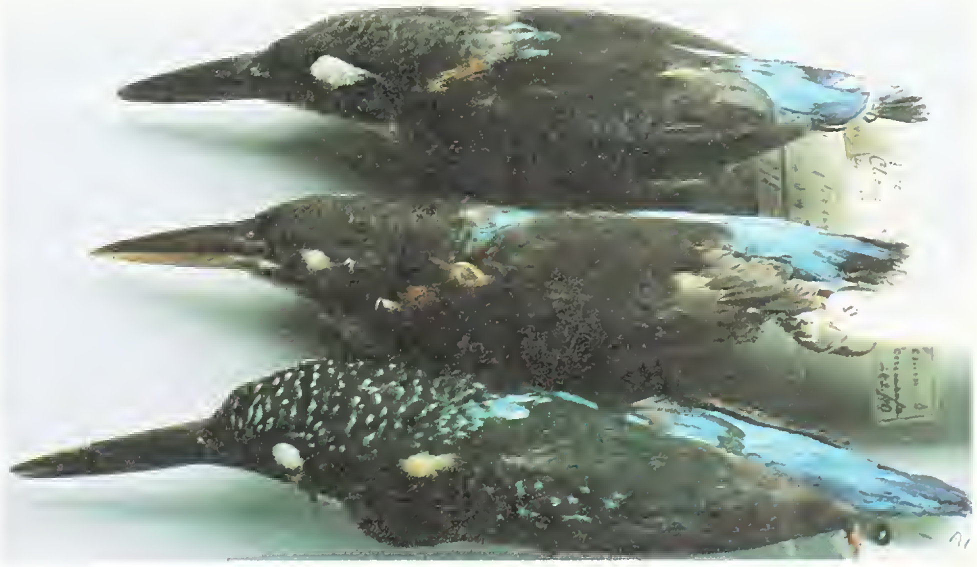

Plate 4 and 5. Blue-banded Kingfisher *Alcedo euryzona* male (upper bird), female (centre bird) and Blyth's Kingfisher (lower bird). Plate 4 upperparts; plate 5 underparts (Photos: C. Robson).

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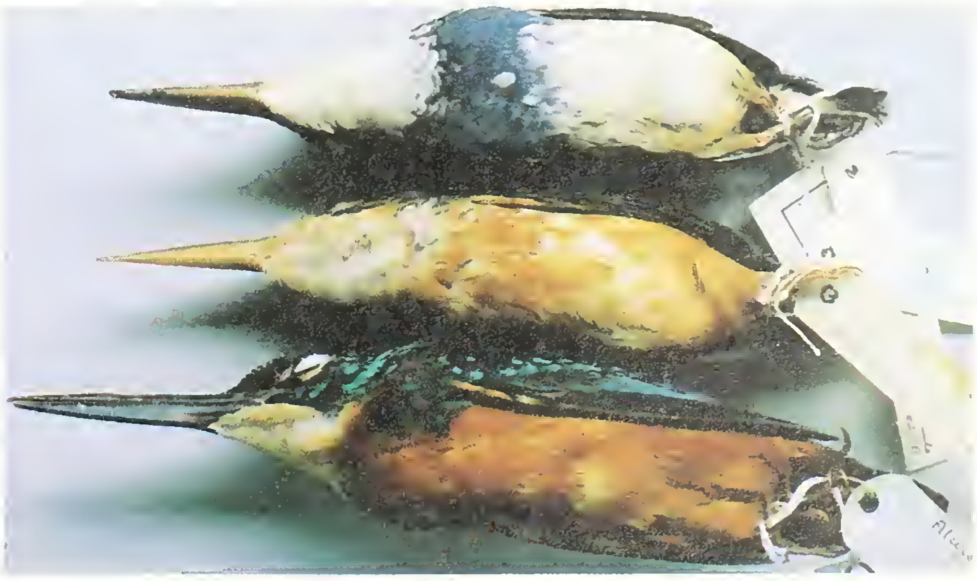

Table 1. Overlap (shading) in the breeding (R) and wintering (W) ranges of five *Alcedo* kingfishers in the Oriental Region; Blyth's *A. hercules*, Common *A. atthis*, Blue-eared *A. meninting*, Blue-banded *A. euryzona*, and Small Blue *A. coerulescens*. The full species range is given for Blyth's, Blue-eared, Blue-banded Kingfishers and Small Blue but not for Common (also Palearctic, west Asia, and the New Guinean and Solomons region). Subspecies follow Fry, Fry and Harris (1992).

REGION		*A. hercules*	*A. atthis*[*1]	*A. meninting*[*2]	*A. euryzona*[*3]	*A. coerulescens*
Pakistan			R			
India	south		R *A. a. taprobana*	R *A. m. philipsi*		
	east		R[*4]			
Sri Lanka			R *A. a. taprobana*	R *A. m. philipsi*		
Andaman Islands			R	R *A. m. rufigaster*		
Nicobar Islands			R			
Nepal		R? (one record)	R	R (foothills)		
Sikkim to Manipur[*5]		R	R	R (foothills)		
Bangladesh		R (north only)	R	R		
China (Oriental)		R (south Yunnan only)	R	R (south Yunnan only)		
Hainan		R	R			
Nansei Shoto (Japan)			R			
Myanmar[*6]	north-west	R	R	R		
	north-east	R	R	R		
	central		R	R (few records)		
	west		R			
	east		R	R	R (few records)	
	peninsular		R	R *A. m. scintillans*	R	
Thailand	north-west	W? (few records)	W	R		
	north-east		W			
	west		R/W	R *A. m scintillans*	R	
	central		R/W			
	south-east		W	R *A. m. scintillans?*		
	peninsular		W	R *A. m. scintillans*	R	
Laos		R	R/W	R north Laos only		
Cambodia			R	?		
Vietnam	Tonkin	R	R/W			
	Annam	R	R/W	R		
	Cochinchina		R	R		
Peninsular Malaysia			W	R *A. m. verreauxii*	R	
Borneo[*7]			W	R *A. m. verreauxii*	R *A. e. euryzona*	
Sumatra			W	R *A. m. meninting*[*8]	R *A. e. euryzona*	R (south only)
Java			W	R *A. m. meninting*	R *A. e. euryzona*	R
Lesser Sundas			R *A. a floresiana*[*9]	R *A. m. meninting*[*10]		R[*11]
Palawan[*12]			W	R *A. m. verreauxii*		
Sulawesi	north		R *A. a. hispidoides*[*9]			
	south		R *A. a. hispidoides*[*9]	R *A. m. meninting?*		
Banggai and Sula Is.			R *A. a. hispidoides*[*9]	R *A. m. meninting*		
Moluccas			R *A. a. hispidoides*[*9]			

[*1] *A. atthis bengalensis* unless otherwise stated; [*2] *A. meninting coltarti* unless otherwise stated; [*3] *A. euryzona peninsulae* unless otherwise stated; [*4] *A. a. bengalensis* is found throughout India except the north-west (absent ?) and south India (replaced by *A. a. taprobana*); [*5] includes Bhutan and all north-eastern Indian states; [*6] formerly Burma; [*7] includes *A. meninting verreauxii* on associated islands of Bangka, Belitung, Pagi and Riau Archipelago and the nominate race on the majority of the islands off the west coast of Sumatra; [*8] also occurs on Kangean islands off east Java; [*9] *A. a. bengalensis* winters; [*10] found only on Lombok; [*11] found only on Bali, Lombok and Sumbawa of the Lesser Sundas; [*12] includes Balabac and Calamian Islands and Sulu Archipelago.

Range information taken mainly from Fry, Fry and Harris (1992), King, Dickinson and Woodcock (1975), Peters (1945), and Sibley and Monroe (1990) with additional sources being: India, Ali and Ripley (1983); Nepal, Inskipp and Inskipp (1991); China, Cheng (1987); Myanmar, Smythies (1986); Thailand, Lekagul and Round (1991); Viet Nam, Stepanyan *et al.* (1983), Robson *et al.* (1989), Eames *et al.* 1991; Peninsular Malaysia, Medway and Wells (1976); Borneo, Smythies (1981); Sumatra, Van Marle and Voous (1988), Holmes and Nash (1990); Java, MacKinnon (1988), Holmes and Nash (1989); Lesser Sundas, Sulawesi, Banggai and Sula Islands, White and Bruce (1986).

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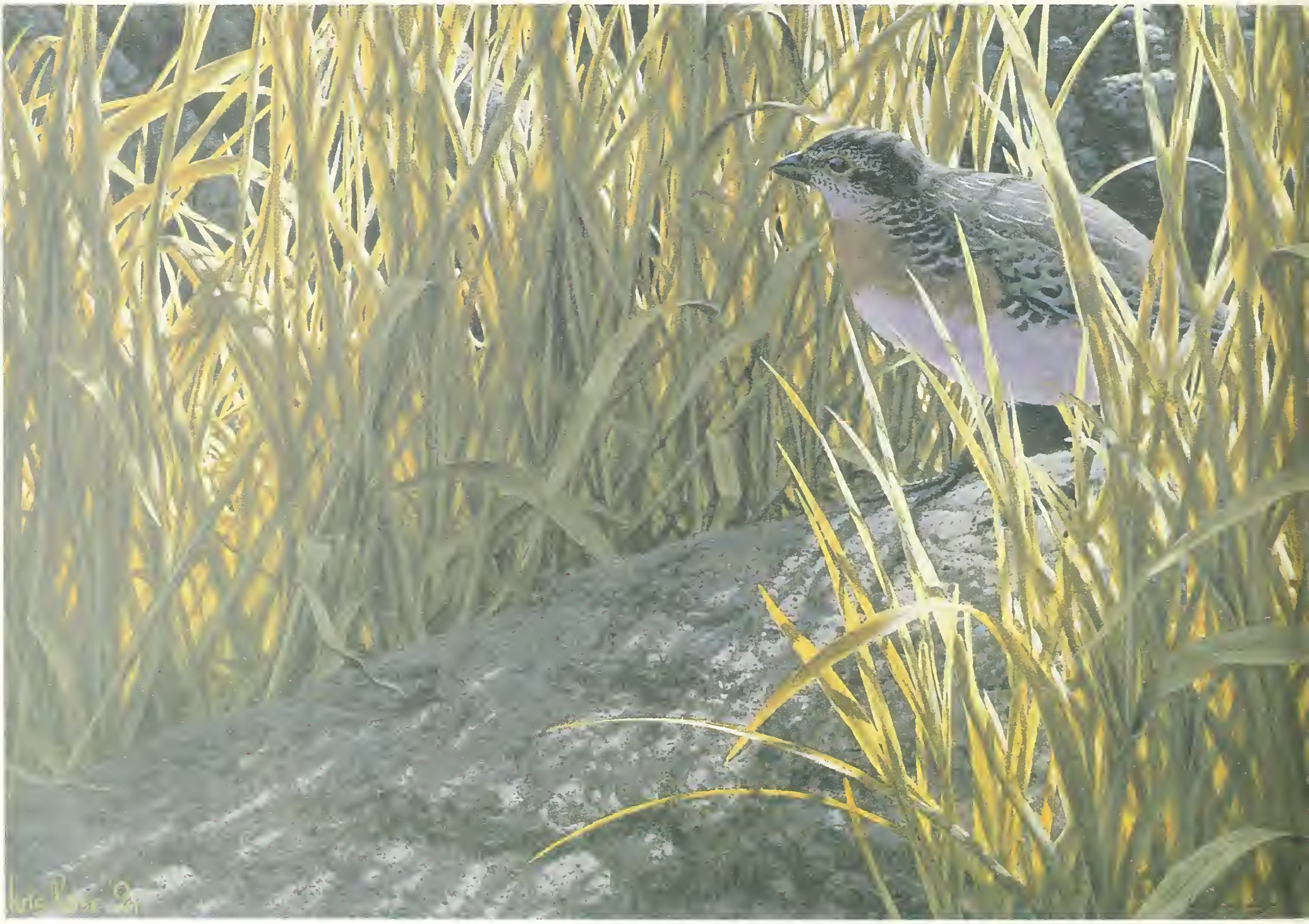
Little-known bird

Sumba Buttonquail

Only a few records exist of this attractive bird of grassland habitats but the authors feel that more field work could reveal other populations on Sumba or on other nearby Indonesian islands.

The buttonquails (Turnicidae) are an elusive family of dry country birds more closely related to the bustards (Otididae) and cranes (Gruidae) than to the quails (Phasianidae). They exhibit reverse sexual dimorphism with the larger and more brightly coloured females advertising territories with loud calls[3]. The family ranges from southern Spain and Africa through Asia to Australia, with seven of the world's 16 buttonquail species being found in the Oriental region[7].

Two species of buttonquail are known from Sumba; an endemic subspecies of the Red-backed Buttonquail *Turnix maculosa sumbana*, and the endemic Sumba Buttonquail *Turnix everetti*, which is known from only three specimens. The holotype was collected by Alfred Everett in December 1896 at Waingapu (East Sumba)[2] (Figure 1). The other two specimens are a male and female (believed to be juveniles) collected at Waimangura (West Sumba) by Sutter in 1949[8].



Sumba Buttonquail *Turnix everetti* by Chris Rose. The original painting was commissioned for the ICBP Rare Bird Club. OBC is grateful to Chris Rose for permission to reproduce the painting in this issue.

There are two specimens from the Dammerman collection, originally ascribed to *T. everetti* by Rensch[6] but which are in fact *T. maculosa*[9]. In October 1989 we located at least six Sumba Buttonquails at Yumbu, 5 km east of Watumbaka in East Sumba[5].

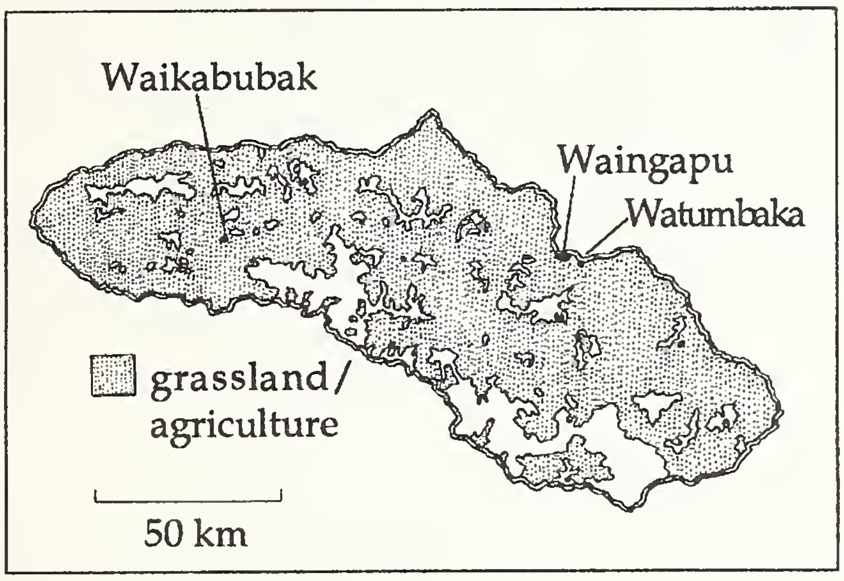
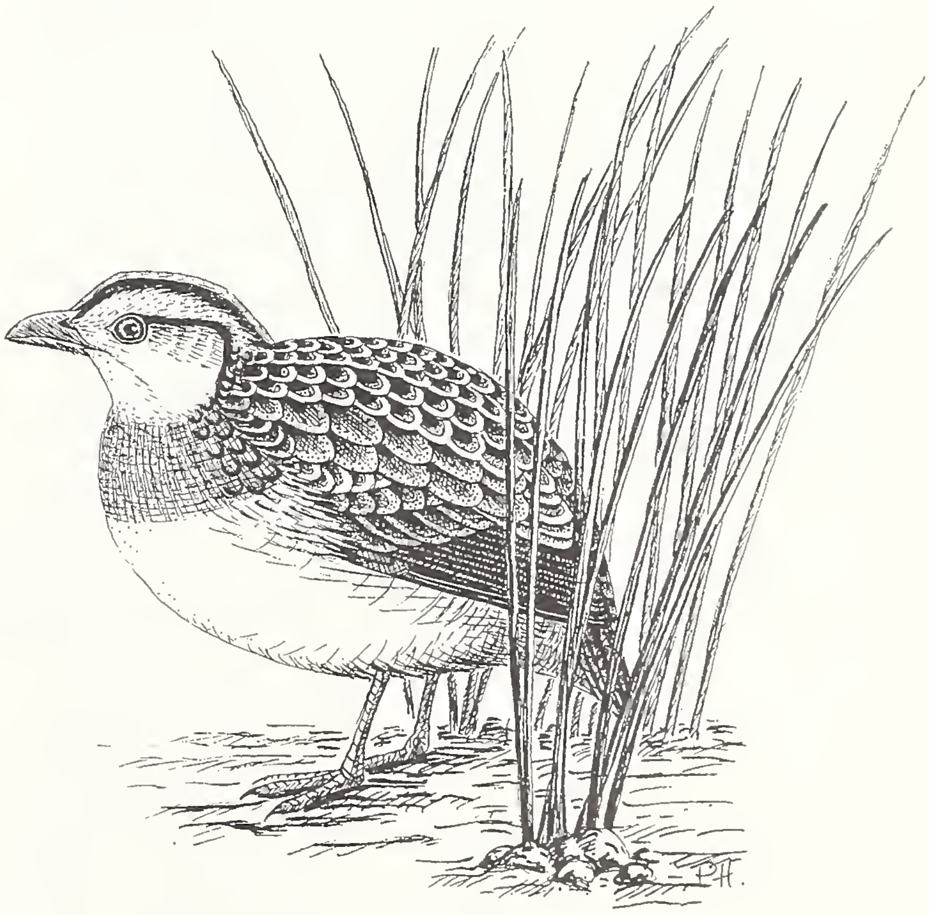


Figure 1. Map of Sumba showing the current extent of grassland and agricultural land and the localities mentioned in the text.

Based on the Sutter bird skins and an individual (probably a male) caught by ourselves, the following general description of the bird has been compiled. The crown is black with a bright ochre central stripe (much paler in the male) extending from bill to nape. The back is dark, the feathers edged and tipped white with an orange-ochraceous sub-terminal bar. The scapulars are edged with ochraceous. The rump feathers are dark-edged grey-white. Tail feathers are dark-edged ochraceous. The primaries and their coverts are dark, the outer three primaries having white edges on their outer webs, the next three with pale buff edges. Secondaries are edged and tipped white. Tertials as back, but the edgings are broader. Greater and secondary coverts are edged ochraceous. The supercilium is bright reddish-brown and the sides of the head are pale with darker feather tips. A narrow black band extends from above the ear to the neck, and down the sides of the neck and the chin and throat are white. The upper breast is orange-ochraceous, and the feathers on the sides of the breast have black subterminal crescents. Flanks, thighs and undertail coverts are also ochraceous. Lower breast and belly are white. The heavy bill is blue-grey and the iris a pale sandy colour. Legs and feet are a dull flesh-pink. No vocalisations have been recorded for the species.

In the field this species is best distinguished from the Red-backed Buttonquail by its heavy blue-grey bill (*T. maculosa* has a slimmer yellow bill). Otherwise the two look rather similar; both species having orange breasts and the Sumba form of Red-backed Buttonquail lacking the chestnut nape collar found in the Australian subspecies[3].

Very little is known of the habits and habitat of the Sumba Buttonquail. The birds collected in 1949 were taken in scrubby and mostly uncultivated fields mixed with grassland, in the vicinity of villages. They were together with numerous Red-backed Buttonquail and Blue-breasted Quail *Coturnix chinensis*[8]. It was well known to the locals, but seemed to be rarer than *T. maculosa* and no more specimens were obtained despite the offer of a reward[8]. The birds seen in 1989 were in sparse grassland with occasional bushes located on a flat plateau of coral limestone directly inland from the mangrove belt. The birds were observed foraging in twos, and were quite approachable. When alarmed, they run from danger or make low escape flights to small bushes. No Red-backed Buttonquails were seen at the site but Brown Quails *C. ypsilophora* were common close by. A search of similar habitat nearby failed to produce any sightings of buttonquail. The Yumbu area was visited again in 1991 by Michael Riffel but a single Red-backed Buttonquail was the only sighting (M. Riffel, pers comm).



Sumba Buttonquail *Turnix everetti* by Pete Hines.

The ecological separation of the two buttonquails on Sumba is indeed interesting since the two would appear to live side by side if not together. The 1949 records of *T. everetti* from inland fields would seem to indicate that Sumba Buttonquails are not restricted to natural grasslands such as the raised coral plateau where we recorded them. Since *T. maculosa* has been regularly encountered in man-made grasslands it would seem likely that both species have benefitted from forest clearance on Sumba. This is not to say that both species occur throughout the grasslands that cover most of the 90% of Sumba which is at present unforested. Indeed, we spent a good deal of time walking through such grasslands and had only two sight records of *T. maculosa* and a few unidentified *Turnix*. At the Yumbu site however, at least six Sumba Buttonquails were present in a small area of about three hectares suggesting that where suitable habitat exists, the species may achieve quite high densities.

The Sumba Buttonquail is thought to be closely related to the little-known Worcester's Buttonquail *T. worcesteri* from Luzon (Philippines), with which it may be conspecific. Both of these forms seem to be related to the Red-chested Buttonquail *T. pyrrhothorax* of Australia which is paler above, duller below and some 15% larger[3]. Johnsgard tentatively ascribes all three to *T. pyrrhothorax*[3] while Amadon and duPont suggest that possibly *T. pyrrhothorax* should be kept separate and that *everetti* and *worcesteri* be considered conspecific[1]. If *everetti* and *worcesteri* are conspecific then it suggests that other populations may await discovery on the numerous islands between Sumba and Luzon (Luzon is further from Sumba than is Singapore). Clearly the tiny number of samples and the lack of distribution data make the taxonomy of this highly irruptive and polytypic group at present inconclusive, and several authors prefer to retain specific status for *T. everetti*[7,8,9].

A three month follow-up expedition to Sumba is planned for July 1992 (see Conservation Fund this bulletin). This Manchester Polytechnic expedition involving twenty British and seven Indonesian ecologists aims to collect more data on the populations and habitat requirements of Sumba's birds and butterflies. While fieldwork will concentrate on forest dependent birds such as Sumba Hornbill *Aceros everetti* and Citron-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua sulphurea citrinocristata*[4] time will be spent gathering data on the Sumba Buttonquail and the other grassland species. Such information will be interesting from an evolutionary viewpoint and may also give useful clues as to the history of forest cover on this little known island.

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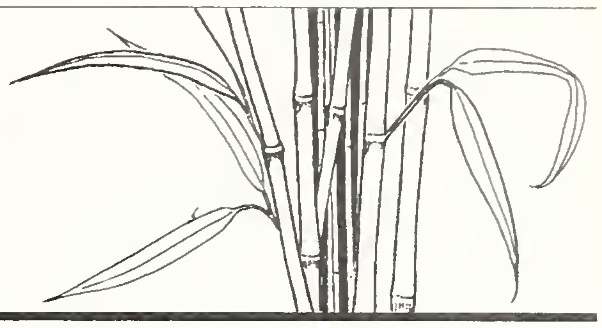
Birdwatching areas



Gunung Gede–Pangrango National Park, west Java, Indonesia

This national park in Indonesia, surrounding the twin volcanos of Gede and Pangrango, has a well defined network of paths which pass through a variety of habitats from lowland primary forest to alpine meadows. It has long been popular with scientists and is an excellent place to see many of the Javan, Balinese and Sundaic endemic birds.

The Gunung Gede–Pangrango National Park is often referred to as Cibodas, which is actually the name of the adjacent botanical gardens. It comprises some 14,000 ha of largely primary montane forest, alpine woodlands and meadows. Established as a nature reserve in 1925, the area defined today as a national park was designated in the early 1980s. The national park encompasses the slopes and peaks of the twin volcanos of Gede and Pangrango (highest point 3,019 m), the former is still active, the last major eruption being in 1886. Rains are heavy in the wet monsoon, and the park is often closed to the public during the wettest months from December to January, because of the danger of treefalls and landslides.

Scientists have been attracted to the area for many years and nowadays, especially during the weekends and holidays, large numbers of hikers and day tourists also visit the park, though most of them stay on the lower slopes and in the botanical gardens. Many articles have been published on the flora and fauna and a number of ornithological papers, mostly dating from the 1930s and 1940s, describe the bird species found in the park; these include a large number of Javan and Sundaic endemics amongst the 250 or so which have been recorded.

The park is one of the most accessible reserves in Java, being only one and a half hour's car drive from Jakarta to the main entrance at the Cibodas botanical gardens. Many buses from Bogor, on their way to Bandung further east, pass the village of Cimacan (the fare is about US $0.50) and a minibus will take visitors from there to the park's headquarters. Permits to enter the park can be readily obtained during office hours on working days. The office is open until late at night on Saturdays as a service to climbers who ascend Gunung Gede during nightfall. From the headquarters it is a short walk to the main entrance to the right of the botanical gardens.

The Youth Hostel (*Pondok Pemuda*), located a couple of hundred metres down the asphalt road from the main park entrance, offers the cheapest accommodation with a shared room costing just over US $1.00. More expensive are the rooms in the Botanical Gardens' guesthouse, costing about US $10.00 per room, but they are sited close to the forest and excellent for birdwatching in the mornings. Meals are available from several stalls along the road to the botanical gardens entrance.

A number of trails go up to both mountain tops, and three of the ornithologically more interesting are described below.

1. Cibodas-Cibeureum-Kandang Badak-Gunung Gede.

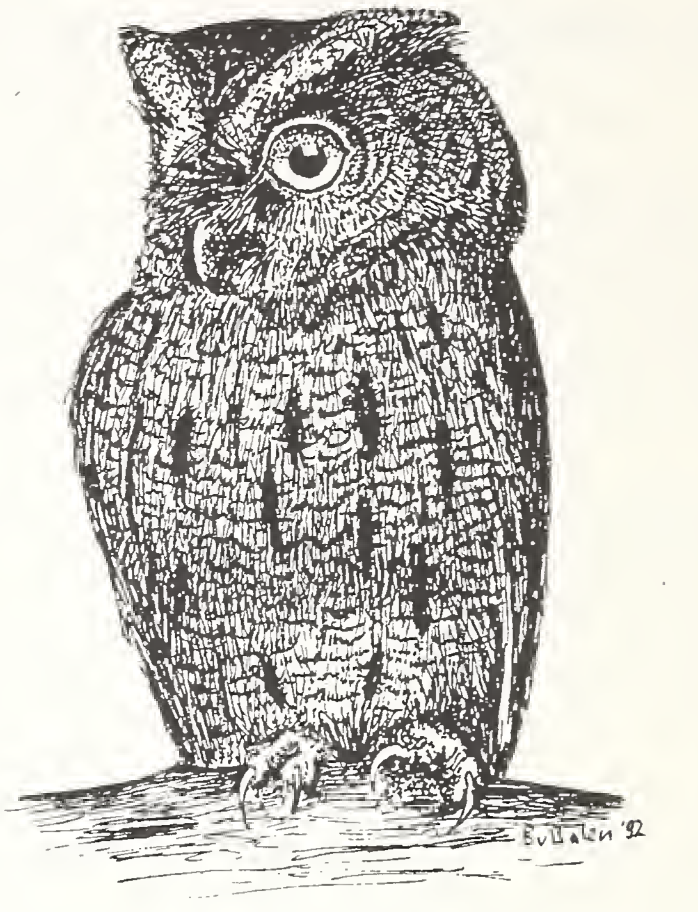
This trail is by far the most popular as it is the easiest one, and leads through a variety of montane habitat types. Most of the Javan and Balinese endemics that occur in the area (marked with *; most other species being Sundaic or Indonesian endemics) can be seen along the route. Starting from the main entrance at 1,350 m, the trail passes first through an area of disturbed forest, which was severely damaged by an extremely heavy storm in the early 1980s that blew down a large area of primary forest. Ground dwelling species can be seen, such as the elusive Sunda Thrush *Zoothera andromedae*, the sweet whistling Sunda Robin *Cinclidium diana*, the Javan Tesia* *Tesia superciliaris*, whose loud alarm calls reveal its presence, and, in the dense undergrowth, noisy groups of White-bibbed* *Stachyris thoracica* and Crescent-chested Babblers* *S. melanothorax*.

Areas where storm damage has created breaks in the canopy layer are the best spots to see canopy feeders, such as the Yellow-throated Hanging-Parrot* *Loriculus pusillus*, Brown-throated* *Megalaima corvina* and Orange-fronted Barbets* *M. armillaris*, Sunda Bulbul *Hypsipetes virescens* (which has a call similar to that of the Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*), Sunda Minivet *Pericrocotus miniatus* (in flocks of up to 50 birds), Spotted Crocias* *Crocias albonotatus* (often heard in a noisy duet) and Blood-breasted Flowerpecker* *Dicaeum sanguinolentum*. Look for flocks of Java's smallest bird, the Pygmy Tit* *Psaltria exilis*, as well as the Indigo Flycatcher *Eumyias indigo* and White-flanked Sunbird *Aethopyga eximia* in the middle storey around forest gaps. Mixed feeding flocks can comprise up to 15 different species, often including some of the Javan-Balinese endemics. These include Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush* *Garrulax rufifrons* (its local name is 'horsebird' due to its winnying call), plain brown Javan Fulvettas* *Alcippe pyrrhoptera*, tiny Sunda Warblers *Seicercus grammiceps*, Rufous-tailed Fantails* *Rhipidura phoenicura* and the quieter Spotted Fantail* *R. perlata*.

The goldfinch-like twittering of the poorly known Mountain Serin *Serinus estherae* can often be heard as they feed on fruiting *Strobilanthus* plants. This herb flowers *en masse* every seven years or so, but fruiting plants, which form dense patches of white-spotted vegetation, are present in smaller amounts in the park throughout the year. The Tawny-breasted Parrotfinch *Erythrura hyperythra*, an interesting and rare estrildid which occurs here, is difficult to detect until its "srrriit" call is known.

Javan Kingfisher* *Halcyon cyanoventris*, Sunda Forktail *Enicurus velatus* and Sunda Whistling-Thrush *Myiophonus glaucinus* can be seen along the shores of the small mountain lake Telaga Biru. The latter two species are, however, more frequently observed near the streams which often run alongside the main trail.

The Cibeureum waterfalls are located at about 1,700 m at the bottom of a path that splits off to the right from the main Cibodas-Gunung Gede trail before Kandang Badak. Early morning or evening strolls here are good for seeing the Waterfall Swift *Hydrochous gigas*, which roosts and nests behind the waterfalls. Salvadori's Nightjar *Caprimulgus pulchellus*, a very poorly known species, may be seen perched above the falls and its distinctive "noodle vendor" tocking can sometimes be heard along the main trail. Also along this part of the trail the mysteriously silent and elusive Javan Scops-Owl* *Otus angelinae* has also been observed.



Javan Scops-Owl *Otus angelinae* by Bas van Balen.

Following the trail for a few hours walk up hill, the open area of Kandang Badak at about 2,400 m is reached. Here a wooden hut has been built for hikers, near the ruins of what was once a scientist's house. The Rufous Woodcock *Scolopax saturata* is regularly seen and heard here, especially during its courtship. During daylight this is the best place to see the inconspicuous Javan Cochoa* *Cochoa azurea*.

The forest structure changes rather abruptly above Kandang Badak into elfin forest, which is lower in stature with an abundance of epiphytic plants. This is a good place to see Horsfield's Thrush *Zoothera horsfieldi*; the sound of heavy wing flapping is often the first indication of its presence. Duetting calls or scraping noises amongst leaves accompanied by busy "prrrt" calls reveal the Chestnut-bellied Partridge* *Arborophila javanica*. In this forest also listen for a peculiar whistling song with an almost human quality which belongs to the Sunda Wedge-tailed Green-Pigeon *Treron sphenura korthalsi*. Its relative, the Sumatran Green-Pigeon *Treron oxyura*, is a species of much lower, though still montane, altitudes and has been seen only rarely in the park. Other columbids found at higher elevations are the Pink-headed Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus porphyreus* and Dark-backed Imperial

Pigeon *Ducula lacernulata*.

The barren crater of Gunung Gede is at the end of the main trail. Few birds inhabit this area but with some luck the resident pair of Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* may be seen. The most conspicuous bird species in the crater area are the Volcano Swiftlet *Collocalia vulcanorum*, Orange-spotted Bulbul *Pycnonotus bimaculatus* and Javan Grey-throated White-eye* *Lophozosterops javanicus*.

2. Cimungkat-Gunung Pangrango

The Cimungkat area was established in 1919 as a separate reserve but is now included in the Gede-Pangrango National Park. It is located on the southern slopes of Gunung Pangrango and comprises forest of the lower altitudes (800-1,000 m), where lowland species such as Black-banded Barbet* *Megalaima javensis*, Ruby-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus dispar*, Grey-cheeked Tit-Babbler* *Macronous flavicollis* and Scarlet Sunbird* *Aethopyga mystacalis* can be seen. The White-breasted Babbler* *Stachyris grammiceps* was recorded here some 50 years ago but there have been no sightings since. The area can be reached from Bogor by taking a minibus to Cisaat along the road to Sukabumi, from where a motorbike can be chartered to Pasirdatar and Cimungkat. A trail leads from here up the mountain, but before entering this and the Selabintana area of the Park one needs permission from the headquarters at Cibodas.

3. Selabintana

This area is easily reached from Sukabumi, by a short drive and walk through tea plantations. There are excellent views over the forest and during the late morning hours this is a good place to see the soaring Javan Hawk-Eagle* *Spizaetus bartelsi*. A trail leads up through good forest on the less-steep southern slope of Gunung Pangrango, and the top can be reached in about six hours.

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Gurney's Pitta: the latest chapter

Ever since its rediscovery in 1986, Gurney's Pitta has attracted an immense amount of attention. Slides of this gorgeous species at the nest were a sensation when presented at OBC meetings. Action to save the species was galvanized: a protected area was established and another destination, Khao Noi Chuchi (or Khao Pra-Bang Khram Non-Hunting Area as it is also known), was added to the list of key birdwatching sites to visit in Thailand. Early research efforts, once they had yielded some basic information on the ecology of the species, were superseded by an ICBP conservation programme, aimed at improving protection and information and giving local people a direct interest in the site's future protection through providing some financial incentives for conservation. This article summarizes the progress of these conservation efforts and makes recommendations for future work.

Gurney's Pitta is unique in that it is the only species of bird which is endemic to peninsular Thailand and Burma. There are no recent observations from southern Burma, but findings around the time of the bird's original discovery about 115 years ago suggested that it might be only a seasonal non-breeding visitor there. Thus, while there may still be large areas of the species' lowland moist forest and secondary growth habitat still remaining in southern Burma, every effort must be made to secure the future of Gurney's Pitta in those small habitat patches which remain in southern Thailand.

Surveys carried out during 1986-88 revealed the presence of only two populations in Thailand: one, which inhabited scattered forest fragments along the eastern margins of the adjacent Khlong Phraya wildlife sanctuary and Khao Phanom Bencha National Park, thought to number no more than 6 pairs in 1988; and another in and around the

Khao Pra-Bang Khram Non-Hunting Area, shared between Krabi and Trang provinces, which was estimated to possibly contain as many as 25-35 pairs in 1988. Continued forest clearance at Khlong Phraya has placed the survival of that population in jeopardy and it is unlikely that more than one or two pairs remain there.

While it is possible and even likely that other, isolated individuals or pairs may be hanging on elsewhere in small patches of secondary habitat, it is clear that the only real hope for the species lies with the population at Khao Pra-Bang Khram. Yet even here, the birds are under severe threat. Patches of forest are still being cut and burned every dry season, while hunting is rampant. As recently as December 1991, a line of 30 noose-traps, probably set up to snare junglefowl, was discovered running right through the middle of a Gurney's Pitta territory. These were soon dismantled but not before they had accounted for at least one Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina*. One month later, a mist net erected 80 feet up in the canopy of a fruiting tree was found. Gunshots are heard every week.

Protection is complicated by the fact that remaining forest is fragmented and scattered among settled and cultivated areas. This makes it extremely difficult to establish a conventional nature reserve which would encompass sufficient lowland habitat because Thai law requires that a *wildlife sanctuary* (the most stringent category of protected area) should not encompass any human settlements. Even though most human settlement at Khao Pra-Bang Khram is illegal, the government would be unwilling to forcibly evict settlers.

In addition, because some villagers have been settled in the area for more than thirty years, forcibly resettling them seems morally indefensible. The current category of reserve for Khao Pra-Bang Khram, *non-hunting area* offers a degree of habitat protection and the presence of Royal Forest Department officials allows the enforcement of older legislation which protects those areas previously declared as *National Forest Reserve*. Even here, there are problems, because the non-hunting area does not encompass all of the areas where Gurney's Pittas have been found and small-scale forest clearance has continued: habitat holding approximately eight pairs was cleared during 1987-1990. Without an increase in the habitat area, there can be no increase in the population.

All observations so far indicate that Gurney's Pitta occurs in well-watered, shady secondary growth as well as in near-primary forest. Indeed, an ICBP study in 1988 suggested that the species may actually prefer secondary growth and regenerating forest. There are also some instances of birds nesting in small, more or less isolated patches of secondary forest and also using, at least occasionally, old rubber plantations in which an understorey of rattans and other native trees have been allowed to grow. This being so, appropriate management, designed to increase the cover of native understorey palms and trees on previously cleared areas might actually be able to increase the amount of habitat available for Gurney's Pitta.

Since March 1990, the Khao Noi Chuchi Lowland Forest Project has been working with villagers in and around Khao Pra-Bang Khram, promoting the growing of native trees and palms in rubber plantations as well as making trees available for reforestation of previously cleared land. More than 60,000 trees and palms of more than 30 species, most of which have come from seeds collected in the forest, have been propagated in project nurseries. Some of these species can be grown for economic gain: rattan, for example are much in demand for making cane furniture and their market value has risen enormously as supplies from the forest have diminished.

More than 60,000 trees are being propagated in tree nurseries (Photo: ICBP).

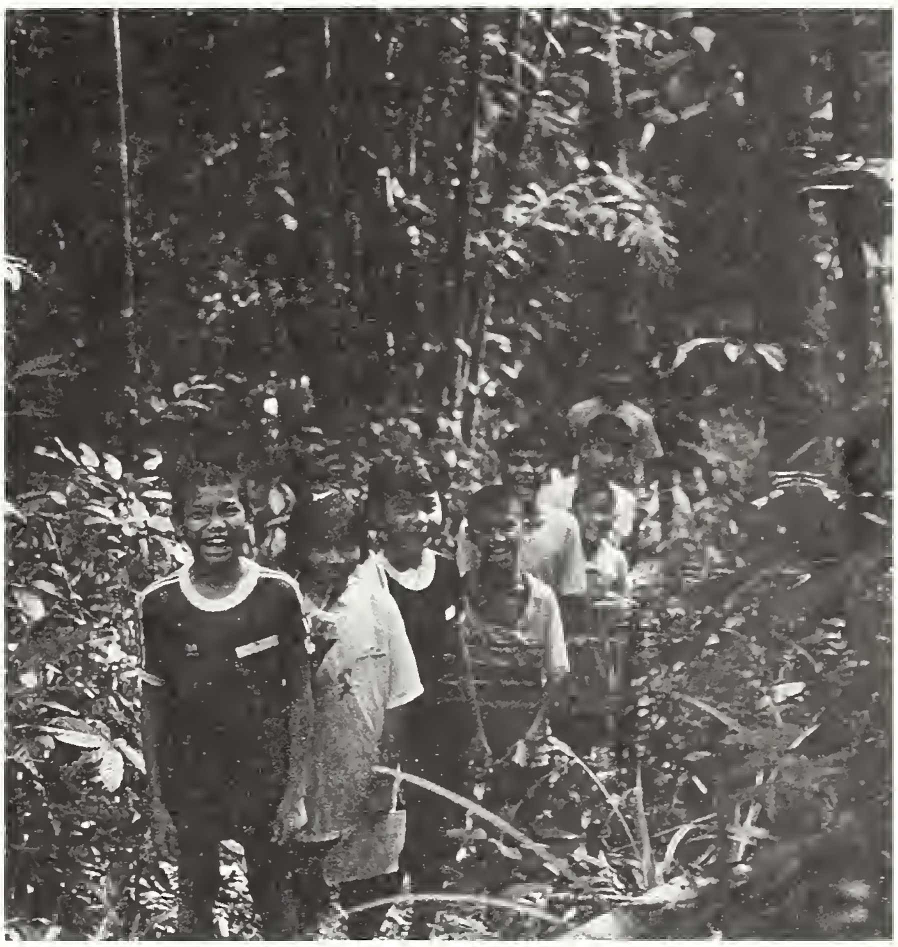
Villagers also collect the fruits of another spiny palm, *Salacca* from the forest. But, whereas these are sour and do not fetch a good price, the project is introducing sweet varieties for planting in rubber plantations; these are grown commercially elsewhere in Thailand and fetch a much higher price. Both rattans and *Salacca* require shady conditions and are therefore ideal for planting beneath the canopy of rubber and may also benefit Gurney's Pitta which usually nests in spiny palms.

Introducing such native tree crops to supplement or replace rubber therefore could have a dual function: it should enable villagers to reap a better income from the areas of land they farm; thereby obviating the need for continued cutting of forest elsewhere; and it might also increase the amount of habitat available for Gurney's Pitta. A network of native trees and palms planted along watercourses and around the margins of plantations, could enable Gurney's Pittas and perhaps other birds to use these as corridors between presently isolated forest patches. Larger-scale plantings could re-create forest elsewhere on cleared but discarded areas.

It may be some years before villagers (or wildlife) start to receive benefits from such initiatives. A more immediate way in which villagers are already benefitting from the international interest in Gurney's Pitta is through income generated from tourism. The project has built accommodation for visitors in the village of Ban Bang Tieo, the closest village to the core areas of lowland forest.

Birdwatchers and other visitors are encouraged to stay in the village and pay the village committee for food and accommodation. So far, since May 1991, this has generated approximately £300 ($558) for the community, some of which has been spent on a public address system for the village, while some has been invested to build further guest accommodation. Donations made by visiting birdwatchers have also been used to establish the Gurney's Pitta Schools Fund, which provides support and educational materials for primary schools in the district, and the project's own education programme provides a newsletter for schools and runs occasional courses and conservation camps for schoolchildren.

Other rural development work carried out by the project includes the construction of a village meeting hall, together with toilet facilities. We have also been active in helping villagers to establish and stock their own fish ponds and are also looking into the idea of setting up a small fund, to be administered by the villagers, which would make low-interest loans to those who want to raise fish or other livestock such as chickens or ducks. In theory, at least, this should remove the need to hunt animals (for protein) from the nearby forests. There have been other, unanticipated, benefits. A local artist, employed by the project to produce signs and displays has, on his own initiative, begun to teach villagers the art of *batik*. Locally produced *batik* T-shirts of Gurney's Pitta, Black-and-Red Broadbill *Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchos* and other species are now available and the project is beginning to examine how other handicrafts using local materials may be encouraged.



Schoolchildren in the forest on a course (Photo: U. Treesucon)

Throughout, the project has received excellent support from local government officials. To celebrate the start of Buddhist Lent, in July 1991, the project invited the governor of Krabi Province, Major Prayote Sudchinda to assist in planting more than 1,000 trees on previously deforested land. This was the first time in history that such a high-ranking government official had ever visited Ban Bang Tieo. Last December, district officials also organized a ceremony at which illegal firearms were returned. 115 home-made muskets (the villagers' preferred weapon for hunting birds or mouse-deer) were handed in from eight different villages around the reserve boundary. The Thai media have also given generous coverage and entire television programmes have been devoted to the project (though no cameraman has succeeded in catching Gurney's Pitta on moving film).

If the project is to succeed in conserving Gurney's Pitta, all such rural development work must proceed hand-in-hand with improved protection. There are occasional rumours of Gurney's Pittas being captured for sale to the pet trade and, while there is no direct evidence of this, a villager was intercepted carrying two nestling Banded Pittas *Pitta guajana* to the market in 1990. The project is therefore working to improve the motivation and training of Forest Department workers and guards, most of whom receive only labourers' wages, and to provide field equipment and financial incentives for more efficient performance. A training course is planned for this year.

Another problem is that the Thai government has yet to fully address the many management issues: even after four years, the boundary has not been properly demarcated. A previous Minister of Agriculture assured the project that the non-hunting area would be enlarged, yet this has still not happened and, as a result, many pairs of Gurney's Pittas lie outside the official boundary and are dangerously vulnerable. What of the longer term? Will the many recent settlers who have encroached into the area during the past decade, both in the lowlands as well as in the important upland watershed of Phaen Din Samur, in the heart of the non-hunting area, be allowed to stay? Or should they be relocated elsewhere? The project is collaborating with the Forest Department to produce a management plan which will address such concerns.

And what of Gurney's Pitta itself? Ironically, due to the multiple demands posed by the project, the two working ornithologists have probably had less time than previously to study the bird. We still know very little about the precise requirements of Gurney's Pitta or even how many pairs there are. Gurney's Pittas are relatively silent for most of the year and this makes tracking their day movements next to impossible. An estimated 14-16 territories were found in those parts of the reserve lying in Krabi province in 1990, compared with only 8-10 at most during 1991. We are not sure whether this represents a genuine decrease in numbers or whether a few pairs simply failed to breed this year. There are at least two pairs that were seen only on one or two days during both years, and neither before nor subsequently.

Gurney's Pitta outside a petrol station. A high profile, but poorly known, species (Photo: ICBP).

More effort must therefore be directed to studying the detailed biology of Gurney's Pitta and other forest birds, otherwise it will be impossible to know whether or not management efforts are actually succeeding. Looking to the future, therefore, the project may need to be divided into two parts: an all-out research effort, perhaps carried out by a university-based scientist and, in all probability, involving radio telemetry of Gurney's Pitta; together with a continuation of the rural development, conservation and management work, perhaps to be carried out jointly by the Forest Department and a suitable Thai non-governmental organisation. We are greatly encouraged by the level of support and interest the project has received, as well as by the number of similar conservation-oriented rural development projects being carried out by NGOs elsewhere in Thailand. Saving the last lowland rainforest in southern Thailand is proving a tough and protracted struggle, but at least we have much to be hopeful about.

Acknowledgements

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The bird-catchers of Dalton Pass

A study of bird-catching on Dalton Pass in the Philippines, funded by an OBC survey grant, showed that nearly one hundred bird species fall prey to the night-time traps set for them in this rugged mountain area. Two threatened species are involved as well as many migratory birds, Philippine endemics and local residents. The study showed how bird-catchers depend on the birds for food and gave an insight into the bird trade in the area.

Dalton Pass is located north of Manila at the municipal boundaries of Nueva Ecija, Sta. Fe and Nueva Viscaya. It lies at an elevation of 3,500 m above sea level and is characterized by a rugged terrain with steep slopes. The pass is on an important flyway of migratory birds and is a permanent bird catching site for local people, mostly Ikalahans, a tribal community who believe that the birds are sent by their gods. It was a major bird banding site of the Migratory Animals and Pathological Surveys (MAPS) Project and between 1964-1967 MAPS trapped a total of 35,000 birds of 164 species[2].

Birds caught by local people at Dalton Pass are not monitored by the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), the regulatory agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. With no recent study having been conducted and considering the growing threat to a number of bird species through hunting, it was felt that an assessment was needed of the hunting activities in the area.

An assessment was made using a social survey consisting of a three-page questionnaire conducted between September and October 1989 and February 1990. This was carried out at catching sites in Dalton Pass and in the respondents' homes. The objectives of the social survey were to determine the following points relating to hunting activities: (1) the species and numbers of birds caught in Dalton Pass for trade and local consumption; (2) the number of mistnetters and birdlighters who regularly use the area; (3) the international and local bird traders who are supplied birds by the bird hunters from Dalton Pass; (4) the species involved in international trade and whether export controls are currently in force for any species. From the results of the social survey policy recommendations could be made for PAWB to regulate hunting.

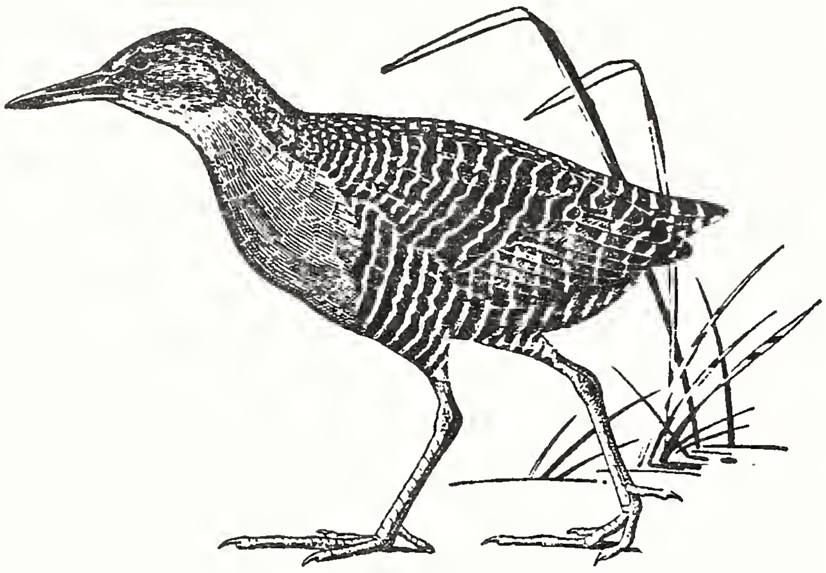
A total of 67 people were interviewed in the survey. All respondents were male with ages ranging between 12 and 56 years old. Among the 67 interviewees the majority were married with more than four children and some with as many as 12. Most of the interviewees were from the Ikalahan tribe but one third were from other nearby municipalities. The educational attainment of the respondents was low with one only having finished high school, and with a poor education the chance of finding employment is very low. This increases the number of people depending on bird-hunting for subsistence.

A total of 97 bird species were caught by the hunters and are listed in Appendix 1. This is in comparison to MAPS data from the 1960s which identified 164 species[2]. Of the 97 species, 29 are migratory, two are threatened endemics (Worcester's Buttonquail *Turnix worcsteri* and Green-faced Parrotfinch *Erythrura viridifacies*) and the rest are also endemic to the Philippines.

Red-breasted Pitta *Pitta erythrogaster* is caught by hunters at Dalton Pass.

The main method employed is birdlighting but mistnetting and decoys are also employed. The preferred sites for birdlighting are on the high ridges in clearings and adjacent to secondary forest. The best period of the year is between August and January when the birds are migrating south.

A pressurized kerosene lamp is used by birdlighters to attract birds which are then caught with a *tawang*, a hand net on a v-shaped bamboo pole. Small hut-like structures are built facing north and the lamp is placed pointing north. As a bird approaches the light, it is caught by a sweeping action with the *tawang*. This method is used to catch large-sized bird species from families such as Columbidae, Rallidae and Ardeidae.



Slaty-breasted Rail *Gallirallus striatus*

All interviewees said that they carry out birdcatching for 14 days each month. During the peak hunting season, about 40 groups of birdlighters (counts based on number of lights) use Dalton Pass, each group consisting of three or four hunters.

The total number of birds caught at Dalton Pass annually is difficult to ascertain. Nearly half of the respondents stated that they catch between 51 to 100 birds, whilst 19 interviewees indicated that during the peak season they could catch up to 500 birds in one night. If 20 groups of hunters (half the total number during the peak season) caught 100 birds per day and trapped for 14 days per month a total of 28,000 birds would be caught each month, or 336,000 birds in one year. Clearly this estimate shows that the current level of bird trapping at Dalton Pass is high and may well pose a serious threat to the survival and population stability of resident birds in the area.

The survey revealed that the basic reason for hunting is subsistence for food and money, and not for recreation. Nearly all the hunters interviewed eat some of their catch whilst 39 of them sell their catch. Doves, pigeons and parakeets only are taken to the petshops in Manila and the rest are sold locally for food.

Alonzo-Pasicolan in 1987[1] identified nine bird species caught at Dalton Pass that command high prices compared to eight identified in 1989 and 1990. A comparison of these species is shown in Table 1. This information came from the same person in both studies, an Ikalahan who is a hunter and trader. He acts as a middleman and buys most of the trapped premium bird species caught at Dalton Pass and sells them to Manila petshops.

His selling price is 100% higher than the buying price. This is because he sells birds after they have been in captivity for one month and has to charge maintenance costs and account for birds that die during this period. According to him, it is normal practice for bird traders to increase their prices by as much as 300%.

Table 2. Comparison of Avian Species caught in Dalton Pass that command high prices.

SPECIES	1987		1990	
	BUY	SELL	BUY	SELL
Flame-breasted Fruit-Dove	100	300	250	500
Philippine Cuckoo-Dove	no data		100	300
Black-chinned Fruit-Dove	30	80	200	400
Luzon Bleeding-Heart	100	n.d.	300	600
Green Imperial Pigeon	100	300	200	500
Pompadour Green-Pigeon	n.d.	n.d.	200	400
Colasisi	15	20	30	100

Among the hunters who sell their catch, about one half have permanent market transactions with middlemen while many (38%) peddle their catch in the public markets of Aritao and Bayombong municipalities adjacent to Sta. Fe. Some birds are sold along the Cagayan Valley National Highway to passing motorists.

There are times when there are plenty of injured birds and the meat is sold at the local public market. Birds such as sparrows and munias are dressed, cooked on a skewer and sold to local eateries. Apparently, it is a delicious appetizer (*pulutan*) for those who are drinking.

A few hunters supply bird skins and preserved birds to national and foreign collectors. The extent of this trade was not revealed as the interviewees were suspicious of the questioning because they did not possess legal permits issued by the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB).

When respondents were asked about the current status of birds in Dalton Pass compared to when they first started trapping, 70% answered that there has been no change in the species composition and number of birds that they catch. Only 7% answered that the numbers had decreased.

As to their awareness of existing government laws, more than half were aware that there are laws regulating bird hunting. Few of the hunters (16%) sensed an urgency in the need to conserve birds, and most of them believe that to mitigate bird trapping the government should provide alternative ways for them to make money. Most hunters are in fact already involved in other economic activities such as *kaingin* farming (slash and burn farming), backyard livestock (pigs and poultry), wild fruit collection for local processing and contractual work such as road repair maintenance.

Located close to Dalton Pass is the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Ofice (PENRO), the office that safeguards and regulates the conservation of natural resources in the province of Nueva Vizcaya. However, the hunters or bird sellers are never apprehended by PENRO officials as the PENRO office closes at 1700 hrs and birdlighting starts in the evening. Unfortunately, the PENRO office collapsed during the major earthquake of 16 July 1990 and the road to Dalton Pass was closed to traffic for 6 months due to landslides.

Dalton Pass is an important flyway of migratory birds but is not protected because it does not meet the minimum criteria of the Integrated Protected Areas System (IPAS). However, the occurrence of two globally threatened species in the area is enough for consideration of its inclusion in the list of Protected Areas.

A long term study to monitor the effects of hunting on the migratory and resident bird species should be initiated. Clearly hunting, which is a traditional practice for the Ikalahan people, cannot be stopped but greater control of the numbers and variety of bird species caught would help. This could be carried out by PENRO in Nueva Viscaya if the manpower of this office was increased.

Acknowledgements

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List of bird species caught in Dalton Pass

Common Name	**Scientific Name**
Blue-breasted Quail	*Coturnix chinensis*
Worcester's Buttonquail	*T. worcesteri*
Dollarbird	*Eurystomus orientalis*
Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*
Ruddy Kingfisher	*Halcyon coromanda*
Collared Kingfisher	*Todirhamphus chloris*
Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo	*Cuculus fugax*
Indian Cuckoo	*C. micropterus*
Ruddy-breasted Cuckoo	*Cacomantis sepulcralis*
Plaintive Cuckoo	*C. merulinus*
Violet Cuckoo	*Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*
Drongo Cuckoo	*Surniculus lugubris*
Scale-feathered Malkoha	*Phaenicophaeus cumingi*
Colasisi	*Loriculus philippensis*
Pygmy Swiftlet	*Collocalia troglodytes*
Brown-backed Needletail	*Hirundapus giganteus*
Fork-tailed Swift	*Apus pacificus*
House Swift	*A. nipalensis*
Brown Hawk-Owl	*Ninox scutulata*
Grey Nightjar	*Caprimulgus indicus*
Red Collared-Dove	*Streptopelia tranquebarica*
Island Collared-Dove	*S. bitorquata*
Philippine Cuckoo-Dove	*Macropygia tenuirostris*
Emerald Dove	*Chalcophaps indica*
Zebra Dove	*Geopelia striata*
Luzon Bleeding-Heart	*Gallicolumba luzonica*
White-eared Brown-Dove	*Phapitreron leucotis*
Pompadour Green-Pigeon	*Treron pompadora*
Flame-breasted Fruit-Dove	*Ptilinopus marchei*
Yellow-breasted Fruit-Dove	*P. occipitalis*
Black-chinned Fruit-Dove	*P. leclancheri*
Spotted Imperial Pigeon	*Ducula carola*
Grey Imperial Pigeon	*D. pickeringii*
Slaty-legged Crake	*Rallina eurizonoides*
Buff-banded Rail	*Gallirallus philippensis*
Slaty-breasted Rail	*G. striatus*
Plain Bush-hen	*Amaurornis olivaceus*

White-breasted Waterhen	*A. phoenicurus*
Baillon's Crake	*Porzana pusilla*
Ruddy-breasted Crake	*P. fusca*
Spotless Crake	*P. tabuensis*
Watercock	*Gallicrex cinerea*
Common Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*
Philippine Serpent-Eagle	*Spilornis holospilus*
Grey-faced Buzzard	*Butastur indicus*
Philippine Hawk-Eagle	*Spizaetus philippensis*
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*
Great Egret	*Casmerodius albus*
Intermediate Egret	*Mesophoyx intermedia*
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*
Striated Heron	*Butorides striatus*
Yellow Bittern	*Ixobrychus sinensis*
Schrenck's Bittern	*I. eurhythmus*
Cinnamon Bittern	*I. cinnamomeus*
Black Bittern	*I. flavicollis*
Great Bittern	*Botaurus stellaris*
Hooded Pitta	*Pitta sordida*
Red-bellied Pitta	*Pitta erythrogaster*
Tiger Shrike	*Lanius tigrinus*
Brown Shrike	*L. cristatus*
Long-tailed Shrike	*L. schach*
Eyebrowed Thrush	*Turdus obscurus*
Brown-headed Thrush	*T. chrysolaus*
Siberian Rubythroat	*Luscinia calliope*
Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*
Blue-headed Fantail	*Rhipidura cyaniceps*
Green-backed Whistler	*Pachycephala albiventris*
Asian Glossy Starling	*Aplonis panayensis*
Coleto	*Sarcops calvus*
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	*Sitta frontalis*
Elegant Tit	*Parus elegans*
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
Pacific Swallow	*Hirundo tahitica*
Yellow-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus goiavier*
Philippine Bulbul	*Ixos philippinus*
Zitting Cisticola	*Cisticola juncidis*
Yellowish White-eye	*Zosterops nigrorum*
Russet Bush-Warbler	*Bradypterus seebohmi*
Lanceolated Warbler	*Locustella lanceolata*
Gray's Warbler	*L. fasciolata*
Streaked Reed-Warbler	*Acrocephalus sorghophilus*
Oriental Reed-Warbler	*A. orientalis*
Mountain Tailorbird	*Orthotomus cuculatus*
Dark-necked Tailorbird	*O. atrogularis*
Lemon-rumped Warbler	*Phylloscopus proregulus*
Arctic Warbler	*P. borealis*
Chestnut-faced Babbler	*Stachyris whiteheadi*
Bicolored Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum bicolor*
Red-striped Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum australe*
Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*
Pechora Pipit	*Anthus gustavi*
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*
Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*
White-breasted Munia	*L. leucogastra*

Simplicia Alonzo-Pasicolan, Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau, College, Laguna, Philippines.

Recently published

The birds of the Philippines *by E. C. Dickinson, R. S. Kennedy and K. C. Parkes, 1991. London: British Ornithologists' Union (check-list no. 12). 507 pp. £ 36 (hb).*

The Philippine archipelago forms a unique part of the Oriental Region. Within its 7,100 islands there is a rich and diverse avifauna of 556 species comprising Malaysian, Papuasian and Palaearctic elements and significant local endemism with 169 species confined to the archipelago. All this in a total land area of less than 300,000 km^2, smaller than that of the United Kingdom but a little larger than New England and New York State combined. It remains, however, one of the ornithologically least-known areas of the Oriental Region, the last comprehensive treatise being McGregor (1909-1910) *A manual of Philippine birds*; the only more recent treatments were Delacour and Mayr's (1946) *Birds of the Philippines*; duPont's (1971) *Philippine birds*, which is essentially an illustrated checklist; and Gonzales and Rees's (1988) *Birds of the Philippines* which covers only 133 species in detail.

The present volume, the twelfth check-list in the BOU series, is therefore a milestone in the ornithology of the Philippines. It provides clear, concise, up-to-date distributional data on all species and subspecies (a total of 1,019 taxa) with information on status, habitat and breeding activities. The bulk of the text is taken up by the species accounts which bring together data from an extensive museum and literature search, including a great many substantiated but unpublished records.

The species accounts are preceded by introductory chapters covering a wide range of general topics such as geography, climate, vegetation, biogeography, speciation, breeding, migration and ornithological exploration. A useful feature of the appendices is a place-name gazetteer with coordinates of all islands from which there are published records of birds, all province names, all type localities, most large cities and collecting localities or locations of sight records mentioned in the text.

It is especially appropriate that this book contains a section devoted to reviewing the threatened status of Philippine birds and current conservation efforts, given that the avifauna of the Philippines is highly threatened by continuing massive deforestation (42 threatened species, the ninth highest total for any country in the world, third highest for threatened country endemics). Of the original forest, 50% remained at the turn of the century, and only 24% was left in 1988; the extinction of forest-dwelling species is therefore quite likely unless remaining forest remnants are adequately protected through, for example, the developing integrated Protected Areas System.

In using this book to extract information on restricted-range birds for ICBP's Biodiversity Project, I have found it an invaluable source of locality, habitat and altitudinal data. However, the style of presentation is not always the most helpful. For example, patterns of endemism are discussed in great (and interesting) detail but with no clear overview or maps. There is a table summarising the breeding months of all species but nothing summarising the island distribution of all species.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that this is the essential authoritative work on the distribution of the birds of the Philippines. What we need now is an illustrated field guide which combines this accurate distributional detail with information on field biology and identification, and then the birds of the Philippines will be fully accessible.

Alison Stattersfield.

The birds of Sumatra and Kalimantan *by D. A. Holmes and S. Nash. Oxford University Press, 1990. 83pp. £ 6.95 (hb).*

This small hardbound volume, of 83 pages, is the second book in a series about the birds of Indonesia, the first being *The birds of Java and Bali* (see review in *OBC Bull.* 13) by the same authors. It gives an introduction to the birds of Sumatra and Kalimantan (the latter being the Indonesian part of Borneo), detailing the distribution, habitats, plumage and behaviour of 148 of the commoner and more colourful species of the region. Twenty-four plates by Stephen Nash illustrate 133 of these species, the rest being depicted by line drawings. A further 129 species are briefly referred to in the text.

Plumage descriptions of most species are very brief, but some useful hints about identification and descriptions of calls are given. An appendix lists the Sunda endemics which occur in Indonesia, including Java. The plates unfortunately illustrate only the males of sexually dimorphic species, and at first sight appear rather gaudy. For the most part, however, they are sufficiently accurate to enable identification of the birds they depict. Its use as a fieldguide by serious birders is limited and better coverage of many groups can be obtained from other books such as King, Dickinson and Woodcock (1975) *A field guide to the birds of South East Asia.* Nevertheless, whilst such a small book does not go into depth in its coverage, birders visiting Borneo or Sumatra will find it a useful volume. It is, for instance, the only book currently available which illustrates the enigmatic Schneider's Pitta *Pitta schneideri.*

Frank Lambert.

A guide to the birds of Nepal *by C. and T. Inskipp. 2nd edition. Christopher Helm, 1991. 400pp. £35 (hb).*

The value of this revised edition of this most informative book and its genesis from the original 1985 edition is partly attributable to the very rich diversity of bird life to be found in Nepal. The country's relative ease of accessibility and excellent tourist facilities (compared with neighbouring Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam and especially Myanmar [formerly Burma]) has generated a great interest in the birds of the Sino-Himalayan region as a whole. The fact that so much new distributional information has become available since 1985 is partly a reflection of this, whilst the maps in the first edition revealed that much of western Nepal was up to that time still unexplored ornithologically.

For those not familiar with the first edition, this book provides a most detailed and comprehensive documentation of the currently known range and status of all birds recorded within the region. The total number of species has increased to 836 species. The authors are to be commended for their scholarship and perspicacity in discovering and collating so much published and unpublished data.

The new edition, like the original, contains 49 introductory pages devoted to an identification guide to the more difficult bird groups such as birds of prey, owls, pipits, leaf warblers and buntings etc. This excellent section is supported by specially drawn black and white illustrations and five colour plates, of which Plate 8 on buntings is entirely new and much more helpful, showing adult males as well as female plumages.

There are also more distribution maps (703 compared with 676 in 1985) to which a great deal of new information has been added. There are also more small black and white portraits or vignettes, as they are called in the list of illustrations, most of which, being based upon the nine different artists' field sketches or actual photographs, nicely show the 'jizz' of the bird, though some are of variable quality. The endpaper maps have been improved with demarcation of reserves and sanctuaries now clearly marked. The authors have obviously taken note of the criticisms levelled at the first edition, not only in clarifying the index and layout, but in the much easier-to-read bolder type face which has at the same time enabled more text to be printed within almost the same number of pages.

There is a wide selection of alternative English names included, an important point when considering the book's readability for the English speaking Nepalese, most of whom are only familiar with the names used in Flemings *et al.* (1984, *Birds of Nepal* 3rd edition). Older names are also of value when consulting earlier published articles by such frequently cited authors as Biswas, Hodgson, (Mrs) Proud and Salim Ali. In the truly impressive and comprehensive bibliography no fewer than 324 unpublished records or notes of field trips, are cited. I would have wished that these had been listed as an entirely separate part of the Bibliography, including as far as is known the addresses of the sources, since this information obviously constitutes a major input into the maps and text.

With the improved layout and additional information following the high reputation already established by the first edition, I am sure that this book will sell well.

Tom Roberts.

Breeding birds of Kashmir *by R. S. P. Bates and E. H. N. Lowther. Oxford University Press, 1991. 367 pp. £17 (hb).* Reprint first; published in 1952.

As the title suggests this book does not cover a host of birds, especially winter visitors and transmigrants recorded from the region, but is confined to descriptions of those birds which the authors have been able to observe on their nesting grounds. Nevertheless it contains detailed descriptions of 266 breeding species and a really unique collection of black and white photographs obtained by the authors, mainly during the 1930s and early 1940s.

In this age of advanced optical technology and high speed film it is a testimony both to the authors' skill and patience, as well as to considerable physical prowess, that they obtained pictures of such difficult subjects as Lammergeiers *Gypaetus barbatus* on their nests, Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea* on tree-top heronries, and such shy species as incubating Lesser Whitethroats *Sylvia curruca* and Eurasian Woodcocks *Scolopax rusticola*, to name a few examples. All these, in most cases with the use of old-fashioned glass developing plates, bellows cameras, with slow speed shutters, and a hide. A photograph at the end (Plate 80) amongst six or seven showing habitats reveals to the discerning, the care which they took to camouflage their hides. At a time when the majority of serious ornithologists felt bound to collect specimens for skins, and, or, whole egg clutches, they did much to awaken a new interest in the challenges of bird photography and to inculcate in naturalists a respect for their quarry and the need to disturb them as little as possible.

The book, finally published in 1952, also contains five coloured plates painted by Mrs D. V. Cowen, who worked under the close direction of Dr Salim Ali and produced most of the plates for his earlier books. It is surprising therefore that one error slipped through the net on Plate III, which depicts *Emberiza buchanani* the Grey-necked Bunting instead of *E. fucata* the Chestnut-eared Bunting, which is the only one of these two found nesting in Kashmir.

During vigils in their hides the authors had ample time to study the behaviour of the birds they were trying to photograph and the text, in lively narrative style, is full of perceptive comments on field characters and habits. These are of continued value even now when much more is understood about bird behaviour.

This reviewer remembers watching Mr Lowther sitting at his own special dining table in the Nedous Hotel, Srinagar when his international reputation as a wildlife photographer was already widely recognised. I hope that for many that this book will evoke not only nostalgia but bring alive some of his or her own enjoyment and fascination with this scenically spectacular corner of the world.

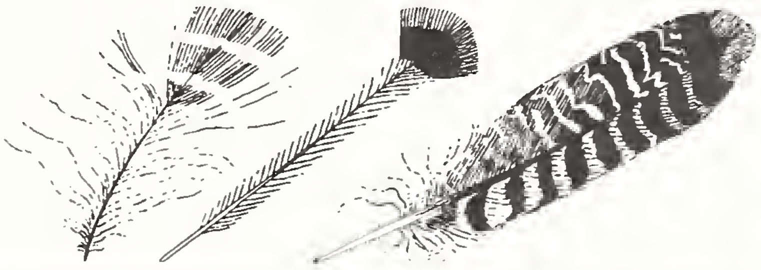
Tom Roberts.

Cranes of the Cloud Kingdom: exploring an ideal man and bird relationship *by P. Gole, 1989). India: Ecological Society, Pune. 38pp, 4 maps. IRs.12, £1, US $2.*

The author first visited Bhutan to study wintering Black-necked Cranes *Grus nigricollis* in 1981. He returned in 1988 and this booklet is based mainly on his later visit. A brief introduction to the country is followed by a note on the first sightings of the cranes by people other than the local Bhutanese in the early 1970s. There are detailed accounts of the three main areas visited by the cranes - Phobjikha, Bumthang and Tashi-Yangtsi, concentrating on habitat utilisation and interactions with man. In a final chapter he notes that the wintering population is apparently declining and discusses possible ways to reverse this trend.

Tim Inskipp

Stray feathers



Focus on the Nepal Birdwatching Club

The Nepal Birdwatching Club (NBWC) was formed in 1982 with the main aims of studying Nepalese birds and their habitats, and suggesting conservation measures to the relevant agencies. Through this work, which has successfully involved both amateur and professional birdwatchers, the Club has also been able to generate an increased public awareness of the country's diminishing bird populations.

The NBWC is the National Coordinator for the Asian Waterfowl Census and organises annual counts at wetland sites throughout Nepal. Each Saturday birdwatching outings for members are organized and there is an annual New Year Bird Count. In 1991 the Club began a successful environmental education initiative with the launch of the 'school mini bird sanctuary' programme. Nest boxes, bird baths, sand baths and feeding tables were placed in a Kathmandu school and lessons given to the children on making the feeding tables and nest boxes. Another success was a painting competition, entitled 'The birds in our neighbourhood' which was held to mark World Environment Day 1991. The competition was organized amongst school children of the Kathmandu Valley and a total of 355 paintings from 18 schools were received and displayed.

You can help the club by providing funds for bird-related projects, by donating field equipment and office materials, and by helping to promote the NBWC locally and internationally. Visiting birdwatchers to Nepal are requested to send their trip reports and details of any unusual records for the country. For more information of NBWC please write to Prabin Shrestha, Nepal Bird Watching Club, c/o Valley Book Centre, Chetrapati, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel. Kathmandu 212242.

Slides wanted of Indonesian heritage

Indonesian culture is very visually orientated and good bird images will significantly enhance the impact of awareness materials. The ICBP-Indonesia programme urgently needs to build up a resource collection of slides and we would welcome donations of suitable material. Slides of common as well as rare or endangered birds would be welcome, as would any slide which tells a story relevant to bird conservation. We are unable to pay for images used, but wherever possible credit will be given to the photographer and the costs of slide copies will be reimbursed if requested. If you can help please send your slides to: Richard Grimmett, ICBP, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0PJ, UK, or; Paul Jepson, ICBP-Indonesia, PO Box 47, Bogor 16001, Indonesia if mailing within Asia.

Information needed for parrot book

Mike Parr, Tony Juniper and David Mead are currently working on a new book *Parrots of the world: an identification guide,* to be published by Helm Information Limited.

The book is intended to point out quick identification features for all parrot species, with plates showing the principal field characters of all important races, sexually dimorphic species and distinctive immature plumages. The book is intended for use as a key resource not only for birders and conservationists, but also to assist wildlife trade monitors and Customs personnel to quickly ascertain the identity and source country of birds in trade.

Any field observations, including notes on calls, taxonomy, reprints of papers, photographs (including captive birds) or any other salient information would be welcomed by the authors. Any papers or photographs used for reference would be returned in due course and contributions will be gratefully acknowledged in the book. Please send any information to: Mike Parr, 14a Metcalfe Road, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, UK.

Fifth international pheasant symposium

The World Pheasant Association International is holding its fifth International Pheasant Symposium in Lahore and Islamabad, Pakistan from Sunday 27 September to Saturday 3 October 1992. Topics to be covered include the status and distribution of rare pheasants, habitat use, management of small populations for conservation, fieldwork techniques, avicultural techniques, monitoring pheasant populations and managing protected areas. The programme will consist of a few lectures by invited experts and informal small-group discussions. For more information and a registration form please write to: Fifth International Pheasant Symposium, Ashmere, Felix Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex, TW17 8NN, UK. Tel: 932 2548551. Fax: 932 253793.

Have you seen ?....

In an attempt to study and track the movements of the Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes,* a pilot project was undertaken by the Institute of Ornithology, Seoul and the Asian Wetland Bureau, Kuala Lumpur with the technical assistance of the Netherlands Institute of Sea Research. The project has developed a marking programme of the species to gain an insight into the population size, dispersion pattern and winter distribution. In July 1990, 82 fledgling egrets were individually colour marked on Shin Islet, South Korea. There were no reports of sightings during the winter season. In June-July 1991, a further 300 fledglings were individually colour marked at the same colony.

The birds were marked with two coded colour bands, one on each leg. In 1990, red and white colour bands were used, and in 1991 green and white colour bands were used. Please send ANY sightings (including those with incomplete details or repeated sightings of the same bird), or requests for more information to: Taej Mundkur, Asian Wetland Bureau, Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Malaya, 59100, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Help with pigeon guide wanted

Photographs of pigeons and doves of the world, both in flight and at rest, are required for an identification guide currently in preparation. All species except those breeding in Britain are needed. Tapes of calls would also be much appreciated. All tapes and photographs will be returned if requested and fully acknowledged. Please contact: John Cox, 183 Main Road, Gidea Park, Essex, RM2 6LT, UK.

Oriental Storks banded in Russian Far East

In summer 1991 four Oriental Stork *Ciconia boyciana* chicks were banded in the Soviet Far East. A nest with five chicks was found in a small oak tree near the village of Murayevka, Tomlovsky District, Amurskaya Oblast. One of the chicks disappeared but the remaining chicks were banded with metal rings on their left legs and red plastic rings with white letters on their right legs. If you see these birds, or would like more information, please contact: Sergei Smirenskii, Laboratory of Ornithology, Biology Department, Moscow State University, Lenin Hills, 119899, CIS.

Ever visited Mu Koh Surin, Thailand ?

The planning section of a Division of the Royal Thai Forest Department is preparing a zoning management plan for Mu Koh Surin National Park. Any information such as bird records would be extremely useful in the formulation of the management plan. Please send information to: Sean O'Sullivan c/o Peace Corps, 242 Rajvithi Road, Amphur Dusit, Bangkok 10300, Thailand.

Information wanted on pheasants, partridges and grouse

David Mead, Steve Madge and Norman Arlott are working on a new book, *Pheasants, partridges and grouse: an identification guide.* This book aims to summarise for each species field information and illustrate in colour all major forms. The author and artists would welcome any information such as reprints of papers, field notes, vocalization transcriptions, current status of rarer species or isolated populations (including introductions), and even personal views on taxonomy of the rarer species. Information is especially needed on the hill partridges (*Arborophila* spp.). Loaned photographs, even of captive birds, would be welcomed, and all contributions will be acknowledged in the book and returned in due course. Members are invited to send any information to Steve Madge, 2 Church Row, Sheviock, Torpoint, Cornwall, PL11 3EH, UK.

Breeding records of Indonesian parrots needed

Information relating to seasonality and breeding biology of the following species of Indonesian parrots is urgently required for the preparation of a report on their status: White Cockatoo *Cacatua alba*, Chattering Lory *Lorius garrulus* and Violet-necked Lory *Eos squamata*. Any information regarding observations of nesting by these species would be greatly appreciated, and acknowledged in the report. Please send to Frank Lambert, c/o IUCN, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK.

Flag watch 1992

Orange leg-flagging of waders has continued during the last year in south-eastern Australia with a further 3,000 birds being marked. The project is aimed at increasing our knowledge of migration routes in the East Asia-Australasian Flyway, so that soundly-based management plans can be formulated ensuring the long term survival of the different wader species.

Species flagged include; Rufous-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* (2,600), Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea* (1,200), Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* (450), Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (300); Red Knot *Calidris canutus* (300), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *C. acuminata* (300), Sanderling *C. alba* (150), Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* (150), Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* (30), Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (20), and small numbers of Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*, Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* and Terek Sandpiper *Tringa cinerea*. Additionally, some Bar-tailed Godwits have been flagged green in Australia, and New Zealand has commenced flagging Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwits white.

Any information on sightings would be gratefully received. Reports of sightings should include species name, place (including latitude and longitude), date and also approximate numbers and wader species present and the information sent to: Australian Bird Banding Scheme, GPO Box 8, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia. Tel: (61)-(06)-2500321. Fax: (61)-(06)-2500399.

The Selangor International Bird Race

Inaugurated in 1990, the Selangor International Bird Race has now become the most prestigious and competitive event of its kind in the ASEAN region, with participants flying in from Hongkong, Thailand, Japan, USA, Australia, Britain and other countries to join local birders. This year's event will be held from the 17 to 18 October.

The objectives of the bird race are: to raise funds for conservation projects of the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) and in particular the Kuala Selangor Nature Park; to promote birdwatching as an enjoyable and educational hobby among Malaysians; to promote Selangor as an international destination for foreign birdwatchers and eco-tourists; and to publicise the Kuala Selangor MNS Nature Park both locally and abroad.

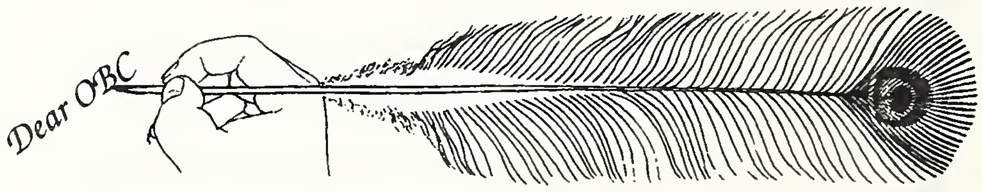
Individuals or companies can sponsor a team of four people with just M $300 and in return the team will be named after you or your company, and will carry your logo and name on the vehicle used for the race. You will receive a full-page advertising space FREE in the Souvenir Programme and in addition you or your company will be mentioned in all MNS articles, displays and promotions related to the race. For further information contact: The Secretariat, Peti Surat 10750, 50723 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: 03-7912185.

Asian wetland symposium

This symposium will be held in Japan at Lake Biwa Research Institute, Otsu, and Kushiro Cultural Hall, Kushiro between 15 and 20 October 1992. Because of the limited capacity of the conference hall, the number of participants will be restricted to approximately 150.

The symposium aims to identify measures for integrating wetland conservation and socio-economic development, preferably through positive examples of sound wetland management. Special foci of the symposium will be: current issues and required action and legislation for the wise use of wetlands; appropriate management and monitoring measures for Ramsar sites; and international cooperation in financing and research for wetland management. For more details please contact: Prof. H. Isozaki, Secretary-General of the Asian Wetland Symposium c/o Town Planning, 606 Sunny Plaza Bld., 2-2-10 Shinjuku, Shinjuki-ku, Tokyo, 160 Japan. Tel: +81-3-3350-5046. Fax: +81-3-3350-5855.

To the editor



Etiquette for western birdwatchers visiting the Orient

To visit many of the best birdwatching sites in the Orient it is important to first obtain the necessary permits or permission from relevant government or provincial offices. A number of birdwatchers' trip reports have described difficulties and frustrations in dealing with officials in various countries of the Orient, and in some cases have interpreted the response they receive as deliberate awkwardness or obduracy on the part of the official. An alternative interpretation could be that birdwatchers, unfamiliar with eastern cultures and manners have unwittingly caused offence or insult. I would like to provide some hints on etiquette which I hope will help birdwatchers in their dealings with officials.

In Asia there is not the same level of duty delegation as in the west and many matters concerning western tourists are likely to be dealt with by someone in a senior position. Generally people in Asia take pride in their appearance, and it is understandable that westerners who turn up at government offices looking scruffier than someone from the slums of Jakarta, are given scant attention. When going to an office to request a permit it is therefore important to dress respectably. For men this would be in a shirt with a collar, long trousers and closed shoes and socks; for women, long sleeves and trousers or a skirt below the knees.

A hand-shake is the norm when meeting or leaving, and generally when entering someone's office or home you should wait to be invited to sit down; similarly if tea or food is brought in you should wait to be invited to eat or drink. When meeting with someone it is often not considered polite to come immediately to the point of your visit; instead it is more appropriate to first pass a few pleasantries.

In the west we give little thought to our hands, using which ever is the most convenient. In Asia, however, there are deep cultural conventions which originate from basic hygiene. The left hand is used for parts of the body below the navel and the right hand for those above. When giving or receiving anything it is therefore important to use your right hand. Posture can also be important; speaking to someone with your hands on your hips is likely to be considered an aggressive posture, and folded arms can be interpreted as impatience or boredom.

In Asia there will always be times of frustration and delay when dealing with the bureaucracy. When you are hot and tired it is easy to get irritated, but the golden rule in Asia is to contain your frustration. In all oriental countries getting irritated or losing your temper will cause only problems. Patience, a joke and a smile are the best way ahead. If an official appears unhelpful, it may be that he simply does not have the authority to grant your request, and pressure on your part is then both unfair and useless.

As a final thought it is perhaps worth remembering that when you visit the Orient the purpose of your trip is to watch birds, either for study or pleasure. Trying to change or question culture and bureaucracies is a fruitless and arrogant exercise. Both may seem strange and inexplicable, but so are the birds and that is what makes the Oriental region so attractive.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Bas van Balen, Wahyu Raharjaningtrah and Marcel Silvius for their suggestions and insights.

Paul Jepson, Programme Officer, ICBP Indonesia Programme, PO Box 212/Boo, Jl. Cilosari Block BXII, Bogor Baru, Bogor 16001, Indonesia.

From the field

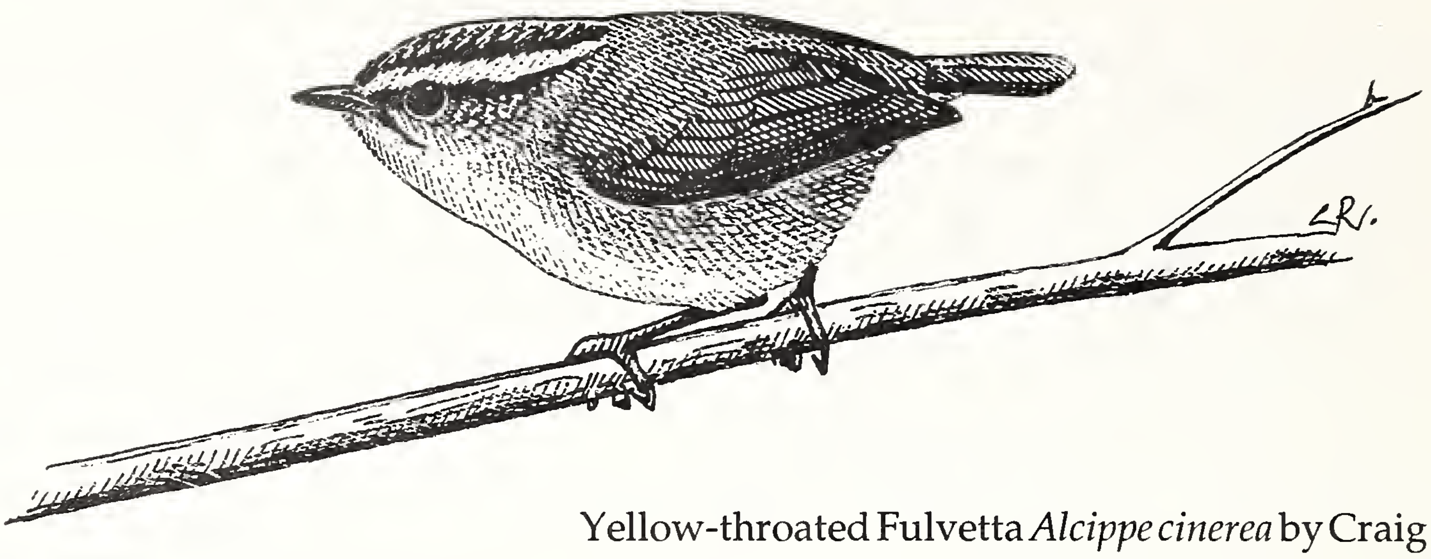
These are largely unconfirmed records covering the period from late July 1991 to March 1992. We urge that, if they have not already done so, contributors provide full details to the relevant regional organisations in due course.

BANGLADESH

Two Black Storks *Ciconia nigra* near Aricha on 18 January (DJ) and a pair of Little Crakes *Porzana parva* on Hail Haor on 25 December (PT, DJ) were both new species records for Bangladesh. Also new for the country, and seen during February, were two Eurasian Griffons *Gyps fulvus* north-east of Dhaka, Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon *Treron apicauda* in West Banugatch (Lowercharra) Forest and a Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* at Hail Haor (DS, AKh). Several Great Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo*, a male Falcated Duck *Anas falcata*, a flock of Red-crested Pochards *Netta rufina* and a Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* all along the Jamuna River north of Bahadurabad on 7 March (DJ), were notable recent records for Bangladesh; the last being the first record this century. Two Short-toed Snake-Eagles *Circaetus gallicus* over Dhaka Golf Course on 12 December (DJ) were unusual, while a Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* over the Dhaleswari, near Dhaka on 31 January was probably only the third record (DJ, AmK, PT, JW). In mid-winter the annual waterfowl and wader counts in the eastern coastal zone produced the second highest mid-winter total of Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*, with c. 100 in two general areas; Urir Char and Dhal Char (PT, AKh, WA). A total of 2,760 Indian Skimmers *Rynchops albicollis* were also counted in three concentrations; at Urir Char, Char Jonak and Nijum Dweep (PT, AKh, WA). Other waders of note were a Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* on Char Nur Islam on 14 January (PT, AKh, WA). Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* is a species which appears to have been overlooked in the past in Bangladesh with a number being recently recorded; one at Hail Haor on 25 December, 15 on part of the Hakaluki Haor complex on 27 December (PT, DJ), 22 on Sonar Char on 18 January (PT, AKh, WA), and 30 near Aricha the same day (DJ). Two interesting species were seen at Patenga, Chittagong on 7 December (DJ, PT); a male Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*, the first for Bangladesh, and a male Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*, the second record for the country. Also of note there were a Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* and 21 Common Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*.

BHUTAN

Noteworthy sightings during a visit to this little known country (CI, TI) included two White-bellied Herons *Ardea insignis* by the river Punakha-Tashitang on 4 November, three Rufous-necked Hornbills *Aceros nipalensis* 15 km below Namning



Yellow-throated Fulvetta *Alcippe cinerea* by Craig Robson.

on 26-27 October, two American Pipits *Anthus rubescens* in the Choeker Valley on 26 October, two to four Rufous-headed Parrotbills *Paradoxornis ruficeps* 15 km below Namning on 26-27 October, and six White-naped Yuhinas *Yuhina bakeri* above Phuntsholing on 9 November.

INDIA

In Darjeeling, a male Blue-fronted Robin *Cinclidium frontale* was found in a spinach crop in a small garden at Lava, near Kalimpong, together with four other species of chat and five species of thrush, on 16-17 March (NR *et al.* - Birdquest), while at Tiger Hill a single Yellow-throated Fulvetta *Alcippe cinerea* was reported on 23 March (RM - Birdquest)

INDONESIA

Moluccas

A number of interesting observations were made on Bacan (FL). Standard-wings *Semioptera wallacii* were found to be fairly common in forest from c. 100 m to at least 1,150 m elevation. Six Pink-headed Imperial Pigeons *Ducula rosacea* and a Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* near Gorogoro in mid November and a pale Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* near Labuha on 1 February were new records for Bacan, as were two Fork-tailed Swifts *Apus pacificus* observed on Kasiruta Island on 21 November. Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii* observed between Bacan and Kasiruta also represent new records for the area. On a visit to Obi in February (FL) the following birds were seen for the first time there: Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, Plain Bush-hen *Amaurornis olivaceus*, Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris*, Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*, Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, Yellow Wagtail *M. flava* and Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi*. Birds resembling the nominate race of Creamy-throated White-eye *Zosterops atriceps*, a north Moluccan endemic, were observed at 220-730 m elevation. Hundreds of Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus* were noted at sea between Obi and Bacan on 1 February. Carunculated Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus granulifrons*, endemic to Obi, was recorded between 40 and 550 m elevation in scrubby coastal areas with scattered tall trees and also in primary forest. Local people on Obi reported that Moluccan Woodcocks *Scolopax rochussenii* were regularly flushed from forest above 500 m elevation. A probable Meyer's Goshawk *Accipiter meyerianus* on Obi would be the first record for the island.

Taliabu, Mangole and Sanana

The University of East Anglia-Indonesian Institute of Sciences-Indonesian Institute of Forestry-ICBP Indonesian Section team to these islands in the Sula group during September and October (AS, PD *et al.*) was very successful. In addition to the findings on endemics (see Conservation Fund, this issue) there were many new records for these islands and the Sula group in general. New records for Taliabu were: up to six Little Pied Cormorants *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos* and c. 14 Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster* on 26 and 30 October; also White-bellied Imperial Pigeon *Ducula forsteni*, Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hieraaetus kienerii*, Garganey *Anas querquedula*; Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Great Eared-Nightjar *Eurostopodus macrotis*, Moluccan Swiftlet *Collocalia infuscata*, Red-bellied Pitta *Pitta erythrogaster*, Elegant Pitta *P. elegans*, Gray's Warbler *Locustella fasciolata*, Oriental Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*, Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*, Henna-tailed Jungle-Flycatcher *Rhinomyias colonus*, Citrine Canary-Flycatcher *Culicicapa helianthea* and Black Sunbird *Nectarinia aspasia*.

On Mangole the following species were new: a Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana* on 6 and 7 September; six Oriental Plovers *Charadrius veredus* on 30 October; small numbers of Wood Sandpipers *Tringa glareola* and a juvenile Little Curlew *Numenius minutus* on 29 October. A White-bellied Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* on 6 September was a first record for Sanana. New records for Taliabu and the Sula Islands were: small numbers of Cinnamon Bitterns *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*; two Lesser Fish-Eagles *Ichthyophaga humilis*; a Peregrine Falcon on 12 October; a Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* on 25 October; a Sanderling *Calidris alba* from 17 October; a total of seven Terek Sandpipers *Tringa cinerea* on 30 September and 26 October; two Parasitic Jaegers *Stercorarius parasiticus* on 26 October; four Whiskered Terns *Chlidonias hybridus* and a Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica* on 17-26 October; two White-throated Needletails *Hirundapus caudacutus* on 2 October and a Fork-tailed Swift the same day; at least three Red-backed Thrushes *Zoothera erythronota*, which were possibly of a new subspecies; Mountain Tailorbird *Orthotomus cuculatus*, Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra*, Little Pied Flycatcher *F. westermanni* and Sulawesi Myzomela *Myzomela chloroptera*. New for Mangole and the Sula Islands were: an Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* on 13 October; a juvenile Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* on 11 October; 12 Wandering Whistling-Ducks *Dendrocygna arcuata* on 12 October; a Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa* on 27 October; two Mongolian Plovers *Charadrius mongolus*; a Little Ringed Plover *C. dubius* on 29-30 October; a Malaysian Plover *C. peronii* on 28-30 October; at least five Sharp-tailed Sandpipers *Calidris acuminata* on 27-30 October; a Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* on 30 October; a Marsh Sandpiper *T. stagnatilis* on 27 October; a Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* on 13 October; an Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* on 29 October; a Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus* on 30 October, and a Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* on 30 October. New records for Taliabu, Mangole and the Sula Islands were the following: Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*, Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*, Oriental Hobby *Falco severus*, Sunda Teal *Anas gibberifrons*, White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea*, Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, Rufous-necked Stint *C. ruficollis*, Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* and a few Nicobar Pigeons *Caloenas nicobarica* in late September and late October. Bridled Tern *S. anaethetus* and small numbers of Pechora Pipits were new for Taliabu, Sanana and the Sula Islands. Red-necked Phalaropes in flocks of up to 300, were new for Taliabu, Mangole, Sanana and the Sula Islands.

MALAYSIA

Sabah

On Mount Kinabalu, a male Japanese Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* on 23 January and a singing male Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* on 27 January were apparently new records for Borneo (CR). Also of note were three or four possible South Polar Skuas *Catharacta maccormicki* and c. 15 Pomarine Jaegers *Stercorarius pomarinus* on the sea between Kota Kinabalu and Pulau Tiga, on 17 February (CR, CB).

PHILIPPINES

The Cambridge Philippines Rainforest Project, which surveyed forests on Negros, Siquijor and Mindoro (see Conservation Fund, this issue) came up with a number of interesting findings (TE, GD, TB *et al.*). A Negros Bleeding-heart *Gallicolumba keayi*, a bird reported to be very rare by local trappers, was seen at Mambucal/Wasay, Mt. Canlaon National Park, during 30 July to 7 August. The species was also reported from the Guintubdan area in the south-west of the national park during 19 to 29 July. On Siquijor, at Lilo-an, a Philippine Cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia*, probably one of the last in this part of the Philippines, was seen on 27 and 28 August. Others were reported on Mindoro at Mt. Ilong, Calapan during 4 to 10 September and near Calintaan, just outside Iglit-Baco National Park during 24 September to 1 October. Several Mindoro Imperial Pigeons *Ducula mindorensis*, and Mindoro Scops-Owl *Otus mindorensis* were heard calling at Mt. Hinundunang near Roxas/Tanga River, between 13 and 20 September; the first records of both away from Mt. Halcon. Mindoro Bleeding-hearts *G. platenae* were reported from Mt. Hinundunang and near Calintaan. Two were seen, the only recent sight record, after the survey at Sablayan Penal Colony in December (RT). Also on Mindoro, Black-hooded Coucals *Centropus steerii* were recorded near Calintaan and two were seen after the survey at Sablayan Penal Colony (RT) in December.

During a brief visit to Tawi-Tawi in September (FL), individuals and pairs of the endemic Blue-winged Racquet-tail *Prioniturus verticalis* and a group of three Sulu Hornbills *Anthracoceros montani* were observed in forest on the north coast. One or two Philippine Needletails *Mearnsia picina*, observed over agricultural/forest mosaic near Batu, were the first records for the Sulu Archipelago.

THAILAND

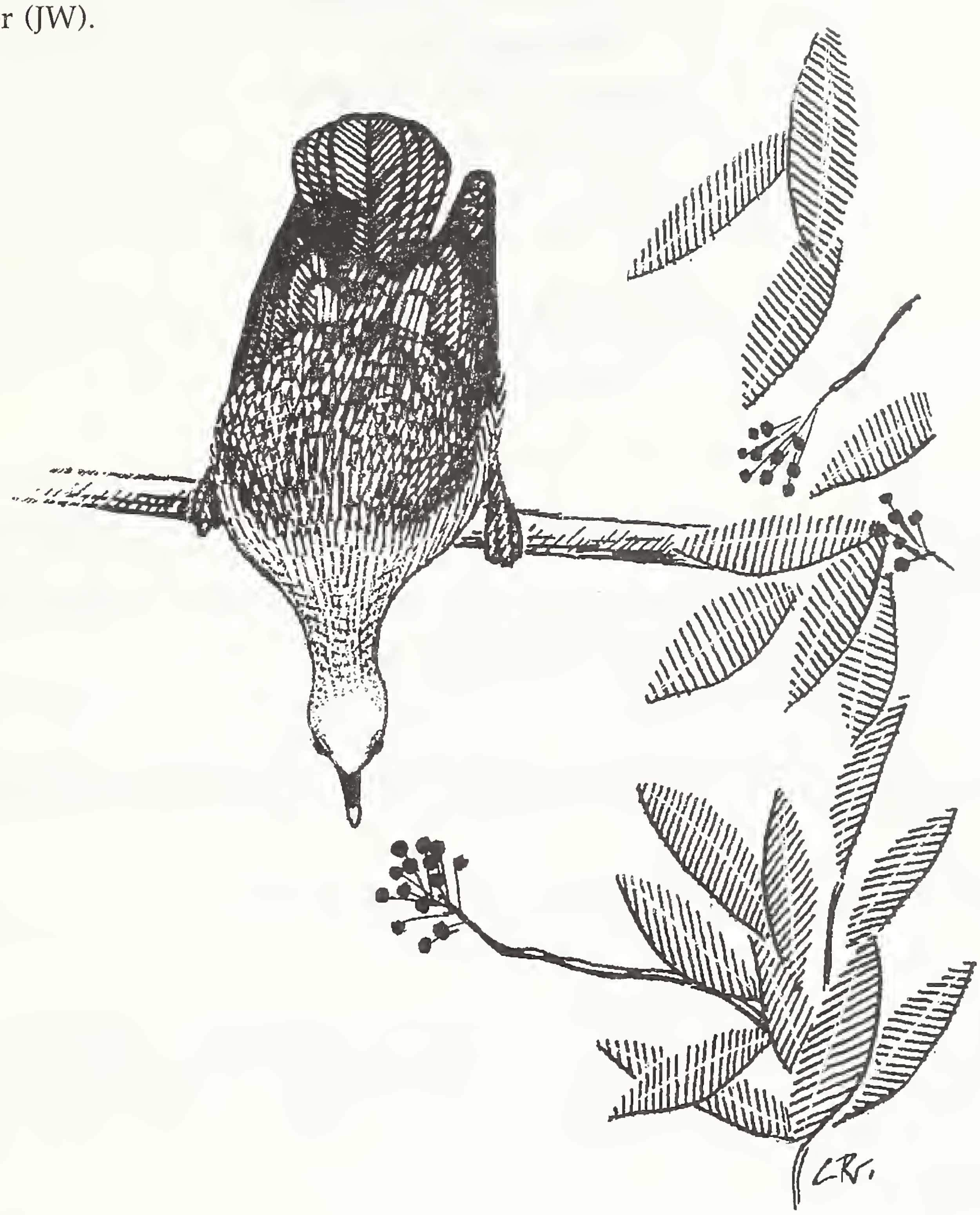
An adult Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra* was reported at Ko Libong, Trang on 29 August (GH); the bird was apparently beached in an exhausted condition and taken into captivity by local fishermen. This appears to be only the third Thai record, and the first off the west coast. On 11 January c. 100 Black-headed Ibises *Threskiornis melanocephalus* were seen roosting at Ban Lung Jorm, Ban Thasadet, Suphanburi (AK, AN, SP, SV *et al.*). Other interesting waterbirds included a Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes* at Paknam Krabi (Krabi mudflats) on 18 December (EM, WS) and a Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* at Thale Noi, Phatthalung, on 14 December (EM, WS). A Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* was found resting on rocks on Ko Maa, Krabi, on 14 November (EM, WS). The first definite record of Baikal Teal *Anas formosa* came on 11 January when two males and two females were seen at Kasetsart University, Kamphaengsaen, Nakhon Pathom (AK, AN, SP, SV *et al.*) with a flock of over 12,000 Garganey *A. querquedula*. One male remained until 23 February. Two previous reports of the species in 1987 and 1990 had no supporting details. Another new duck for Thailand was a male Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* seen at Chiang Saen Lake (Nong Bong Khai), Chiang Rai on 27 December (PC). A single Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* was seen in a suitable breeding area at Wat Chalerm, Nonthaburi, on 9 February (PDu, NP, SV). A most remarkable sighting was a singing Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum* at Krabi Resort on 5 March (KK), only the second Thai record. Other unusual records during the period included a Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma* at Umphang, Tak on 29 July (AL, SS) and ten Fire-capped Tits *Cephalopyrus flammiceps* seen near the summit of Doi Pui, Chiang Mai on 27 January (KB). A flock of 15 Spot-winged Starlings *Saroglossa spiloptera* found feeding in a flowering tree at Mae Taeng Irrigation Dept., Chiang Mai on 1 February (PB, JB, KK) was the largest number recorded in Thailand.

VIET NAM

The first bird tour to Viet Nam ran successfully over Christmas and the New Year (CR, IR - Birdquest). Good numbers of large waterbirds were present in Nam Bai Cat Tien NP, Dong Nai, including a maximum of 36 Painted Storks *Mycteria leucocephala* on 30 December, 12 Woolly-necked Storks *Ciconia episcopus* with a maximum of nine together on 29 December, and two White-shouldered Ibises *Pseudibis davisoni* observed feeding and resting in dead trees on 29 December. The record of the last species is only the second in recent years from this national park and mainland South-East Asia as a whole. Also seen in the park was a pair of roosting Spot-bellied Eagle-Owls *Bubo nipalensis* on 28 December which are the first for Cochinchina. A group of three or four Pin-tailed Parrotfinches *Erythrura prasina* on 27 December may be only the second record for Viet Nam. To the north-east, an unprecedented 41 Pale-capped Pigeons *Columba punicea* were found feeding on a fruiting tree by the dam at Ho Tuyen Lam, near Da Lat, on 3 January. Also seen there were two flocks of Black-hooded Laughingthrushes *Garrulax milleti* totalling c. 20 birds. Another flock of these laughingthrushes was heard near Di Linh, Lam Dong on 4 January adding to the records of this little-known, threatened bird. In Central Annam, a single Common Starling seen in Bach Ma National Park on 24 December was the second for Viet Nam. Very large numbers of wintering Light-vented Bulbuls *Pycnonotus sinensis* and Eurasian Blackbirds *Turdus merula* were present in the same area.

Records were collated by Craig Robson from observations and contributions by the following: A. W. Akonda (WA), J. Beatenbough (JB), P. Beatenbough (PB), T. Brooks (TB), C. Byers (CB), P. Cuerel (PC), P. Davidson (PD), P. Duspiya (PDu), G. Dutson (GD), T. Evans (TE), G. Hill (GH), C. Inskipp (CI), T. Inskipp (TI), D. Johnson (DJ), A. Kabir (AmK), A. Kasem (AK), A. Khan (AKh), KingBird Tour (KB), K. Komolphalin (KK), F. Lambert (FL), A. Liukeeratiyukul (AL), R. de la

Moussaye (RM), E. Myers (EM), A. Nana (AN), S. Pakdeephuvadol (SP), N. Pornankul (NP), N. Redman (NR), C. Robson (CR), D. Scott (DS), S. Setthin (SS), W. Simpson (WS), A. Stones (AS), P. Thompson (PT), R. Timmins (RT), S. Vuthipong (SV), J. Woolner (JW).



Pale-capped Pigeon *Columba punicea* by Craig Robson.

Corrigendum: the July record of Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata* in the Krabi mangroves, Thailand (*OBC Bull.* 14: 50) was erroneous and based on a misunderstanding with a local boatman.

Erratum: in the article "On the trail of the Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant" by Philip McGowan *OBC Bull.* 14, the hyphen between WWF(M) and International Trust for Nature Conservation should not have been present as there is no link between the two organisations.

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Guidelines for contributors

Whilst the Editor is always pleased to discuss possible contributions with potential authors, and to advise on preparation, it would be helpful if the following guidelines could be adhered to:

1. **Articles** These should be written clearly, preferably typed, on one side of the page, with all lines double-spaced, leaving wide margins, and should be no longer than 2,000 words. Scientific names should appear at the first mention of each species or, if all species appear in a table, they may be given there instead. Scientific names should, where possible, C. G. Sibley and B. L. Monroe (1990) *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the world.*

Any tables to accompany articles should be prepared on separate pieces of paper, and be thoroughly checked. Titles of tables should be self-explanatory. Diagrams should be clearly drawn, in ink, ideally 15cm wide and 11cm high. References should be cited in alphabetical order at the end of the paper in the same style used in this Bulletin.

It would be helpful of two copies of each contribution could be submitted.

2. **From the field** These should follow the format in the current edition of the OBC Bulletin, and be sent to OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK.

3. **News/Information** Typed or handwritten contributions should be sent to A. Long, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK.

Although every effort is made to retain all articles in their submitted form, the Editorial Committee reserves the right to make changes that it deems necessary, and, in a minimum of cases, without prior reference to the author. It is assumed that all contributors submitting material understand and accept these conditions.

For **Around the Orient, Recently published, Stray feathers**, the deadline for submission of material is 1 March (May Bulletin) and 1 September (November Bulletin). The deadlines do not apply to main articles which will be published as soon as possible after acceptance by the Editorial Committee.

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